International
Labour
Office

A future without child labour

Global Report
under the Follow-up
to the ILO Declaration
on Fundamental
Principles
and Rights at Work
2002

A FUTURE WITHOUT CHILD LABOUR

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

A FUTURE WITHOUT CHILD LABOUR

Global Report
under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration
on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE
90th Session 2002

Report I (B)

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE
GENEVA

This Report may also be consulted on the ILO Internet site
(http://www.ilo.org/declaration).

ISBN 92-2-112416-9
ISSN 0074-6681

First published 2002

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.
Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

ILO publications can be obtained through major booksellers or ILO local offices in many countries, or direct from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Catalogues or lists of new publications are available free of charge from the above address.

Photocomposed by the International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland
Printed in Switzerland

DTP
PCL

Contents

Executive summary ix

Introduction 1

Part I. Child labour: A dynamic global picture **5**

- 1. Child labour: What is to be abolished, and why? . . . 7
  - A long history of ILO work against child labour . . . 7
  - What do we want to abolish? 9
    - The worst forms of child labour 11
    - Evolving attitudes towards children 13
- 2. The size and shape of the problem in 2002 14
  - The challenges of measuring child labour 14
  - The number of child labourers in the world today . . 15
    - Methodology for estimation 15
    - Global estimates 16
    - Estimates of economically active children 18
    - Can we compare the new and the old estimates of working children? 19
    - What do the estimates tell us about child labour in the world today? 20
  - A better grasp of the shape of the problem 21
    - The sectors in which children work 22
      - Domination of the informal economy 22
      - Child labour in agriculture 24
      - Child labour in fishing 26
      - Child labour in the urban informal economy: Street children 27
      - Child labour in manufacturing: From factories to home-based work 28
      - Child labour in tourism 28
      - Children in domestic service 29

Child labour in construction, mining and quarrying 30
The unconditional worst forms of child labour. . . 31
Forms of child slavery such as sale and trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom and forced or compulsory labour. 31
Forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. 33
Commercial sexual exploitation of children . . 35
Children in illicit activities. 36
3. Child labour and development shocks 37
Economic and financial crises 38
Countries in transition 39
The HIV/AIDS pandemic 41
Natural disasters and child labour 43
Armed conflict and child labour 44
4. Understanding child labour: The foundation for effective abolition 46
Causes act at different levels 46
The demand for child labour. 48
Household decision-making about child labour 49
Demographic change 50
Parents and children on the move. 51
The role of social protection 52
Education and child labour. 53
Conclusion 57

Part II. The global response to child labour: Turning indignation into action 59
1. Better information means stronger action 61
The ILO and child labour research 61
Research challenges and innovations 62
Monitoring child labour 64
Strengthening research capacity 66
2. International action to support national partners . . . 67
The framework for action by the ILO 67
International labour standards and technical cooperation: Complementary approaches 67
The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC): A decade of experience 68
From country programmes to time-bound programmes 69
Child labour in other ILO programmes 70
Mainstreaming child labour in poverty reduction strategies. 70
International action for children's rights. 74

    Interagency cooperation 74
    International action on education 75
    International action on youth employment 76
    International action to combat transnational problems 77
    Regional cooperation against child labour 77
3. National governments in the front line 79
  The policy framework for the abolition of child labour 79
    Institutional arrangements to support the abolition of child labour 81
    The legal framework 82
    Birth registration 84
    Basic social services provision 84
4. Action against child labour: A review of experience 86
  Partnerships for effective action 86
    The social partners and tripartite action 86
      Tripartite cooperation 86
      Collective bargaining 87
      Employers and their organizations 88
      Workers' organizations 91
    Other partners in civil society 93
  Good practices in the abolition of child labour 95
    Important lessons learned in the fight against child labour 95
    Typology of interventions against child labour 96
    Advocacy and social mobilization 96
    Good education systems can prevent child labour 99
    Social protection to prevent child labour 102
    Rescue and rehabilitation 104
    How to tackle hazardous work 107
    Demobilizing child soldiers 109
    Legislation, enforcement and monitoring of child labour 110
  What makes for effective assistance 112

Part III. Towards an action plan for the effective abolition of child labour 115
1. Child labour and the Decent Work Agenda 117
2. Possible contours of an action plan 118
  Reinforcing the work of IPEC 119
    Advocacy 119
    Research and policy 120
    Technical cooperation 120

Mainstreaming the effective abolition of child labour in the Decent Work Agenda 121
Forging closer partnerships.................... 121
Suggested points for discussion.................. 123

Annexes 125
1. ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up............ 127
2. Table of ratifications of ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 and annual reports submitted under the Declaration follow-up in relation to the effective abolition of child labour 131
3. List of countries involved in the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).................................. 137

Executive summary

Millions of children worldwide are engaged in labour that is hindering their education, development and future livelihoods; many of them are involved in the worst forms of child labour that cause irreversible physical or psychological damage, or that even threaten their lives. This situation represents an intolerable violation of the rights of individual children, it perpetuates poverty and it compromises economic growth and equitable development. The effective abolition of child labour is an essential element of the International Labour Organization's goal of achieving decent work for all women and men.

A future without child labour, the third Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, shows how the abolition of child labour has become a global cause for the new millennium. It explores the ever-changing manifestations of child labour throughout the world, and how girls and boys are affected differently, it presents new data on the scale of this stubborn problem, and it sheds new light on its complex, interlinked causes. It charts the growth of a global movement against child labour, reviewing the various types of action being taken by the ILO, its tripartite constituents (governments, employers' and workers' organizations) and other actors at international, national and local levels. The Report concludes with proposals for a three-pillar approach to strengthen the action of the ILO in this field, building upon the wealth of experience gained by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) in the decade since its establishment.

A future without child labour traces the ILO's historical concern with the abolition of child labour. At its very first session, the International Labour Conference adopted the Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 5). Over the years that followed, the concept of minimum age for entry into employment was extended to different economic sectors, culminating with the adoption of the comprehensive Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).

The inclusion of the effective abolition of child labour in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, adopted in 1988, highlighted the growing consensus across the world that child labour represents a serious threat to sustainable economic and social development everywhere. The unanimous adoption, the following year, of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and its subsequent unprecedented rate of ratification, attest to the strength of the political will among ILO member States to tackle, with employers' and workers' organizations and all partners in civil society, these most extreme forms of child labour as a matter of the greatest urgency. Convention No. 182 has served to consolidate resolve on the need for immediate action to combat the worst forms of child labour, accompanied by measures to eliminate and prevent all child labour in the longer term.

The Report clarifies the boundaries of child labour for abolition. The term "child labour" does not encompass all work performed by children under the age of 18. Many children, in very different national circumstances, carry out work that is entirely consistent with their education and full physical and mental development.[1] Drawing on the provisions of Conventions Nos. 138 and 182, the report identifies three categories of child labour to be abolished:

(1) Labour performed by a child who is *under a minimum age* specified in national legislation for that kind of work.

(2) Labour that jeopardizes the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, known as *hazardous work*.

(3) The *unconditional worst forms of child labour*, which are internationally defined as slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment for use in armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, and illicit activities.

Child labour is a complex phenomenon and difficult to research. The absence of information on its extent and nature was, for many years, a serious impediment to effective action against it. But the situation is fast improving. In a new climate of openness, many countries are undertaking comprehensive surveys to investigate child labour. New global estimates by the ILO of the numbers of children who work, and of the numbers involved in each category of child labour for abolition, are presented in the Report. The estimates reveal several disturbing realities.

Some 180 million children aged 5-17 (or 73 per cent of all child labourers) are now believed to be engaged in the worst forms of child labour, comprising hazardous work and the unconditional worst forms of child labour.[2] This amounts to one child in every eight in the world. Of the some 171 million children engaged in hazardous work, nearly two-thirds are under 15 and therefore require immediate withdrawal from this work and rehabilitation from its effects.

While 67 million children in the 5-14 age group are engaged in non-hazardous child labour that they should not be undertaking by virtue of their age, many more children (111 million) are involved in work that actually jeopardizes their well-being. Among older children aged 15-17 years (who are above the minimum age for employment), the estimates indicate that 59 million are involved in hazardous work. This represents an alarming 42 per cent of all working children in this age group.

Over eight million children worldwide are trapped in the unconditional worst forms of child labour. However, as the Report warns, this figure must be treated with great caution given the extreme difficulty of gathering data on these hidden and illegal activities.

Thus, despite the increasing commitment and efforts by governments, the social partners and civil society to tackle child labour, the problem remains on a massive scale. Phenomena such as trafficking in children and increasing labour migration mean that all countries – developing, transition and developed alike – are affected to a greater or lesser extent by child labour. The figure for children engaged in hazardous work is considerably higher than was previously thought. The Report proposes that the time has come for the number and proportion of child labourers in a country's child population, particularly those engaged in the worst forms of child labour, to be considered as key indicators of economic and social development.

---

[1] In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989, a child means "every human being below the age of eighteen years".

[2] The estimates relate to numbers of child labourers globally in the year 2000.

Numbers of child labourers of course give only part of the dynamic global picture that *A future without child labour* sets out to portray. In order to understand this complex phenomenon, it is necessary to examine in detail the nature of boys' and girls' participation in work in different economic sectors and social contexts. Such examination can throw light on the causes and consequences of different types of work for different groups of children (for example, children of different sex, age, ethnicity and nutritional, health and socio-economic status). The Report suggests that some activities that appear harmless at first sight may in fact be damaging to the children involved, particularly in the long term; more research, however, is needed in this area.

Regardless of the economic sector in which it occurs, and almost by definition, child labour is associated closely with the unregulated informal economy, which is largely beyond the reach of formal institutions, including labour inspection services. Although media coverage has tended to focus public attention on certain groups of child labourers, such as street children, those in export-oriented manufacturing and those in commercial sexual exploitation by foreign tourists, such groups are numerically in the minority. The majority of working children, some 70 per cent, are in reality to be found in the agricultural sector, most often on small-scale family holdings, but also on commercial agricultural plantations. While this work may in some cases be natural, many aspects of it – for example, long hours, use of poisonous chemicals or inappropriate or dangerous equipment – can be extremely hazardous. Children in developing countries are not the only ones affected by the hazards of agricultural work. The Report shows that in some industrialized countries this sector accounts for the largest number of occupational fatalities of those under 18.

A future without child labour goes on to review children's work in other economic sectors: fishing, manufacturing, tourism, domestic work, construction, mining and quarrying, and in the urban informal economy. Key aspects of children's work are highlighted, illustrating the diversity of activities in which they engage, how boys and girls are often involved differently and how countries at all levels of economic development may be implicated. Attention is drawn to the many different hazards that children face through their work.

Some child labourers are highly visible, such as street children working in the urban informal economy. Others, such as child domestic workers, are effectively hidden from public view and are thus particularly vulnerable, including to physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Rather than working in formal sector establishments that produce for export, the majority of child labourers in manufacturing toil in supply chains producing for the domestic market, for example, in the production of fireworks, matches or incense sticks. A reported increase in home-based production of these and other goods, in response to heightened competitive pressures, brings with it an increased potential for exploitation of child labour. Such hidden groups of children present particular challenges for research and effective action.

Having reviewed children's participation in what are generally legitimate sectors of economic activity, in which the type or conditions of work transform it into unacceptable child labour, *A future without child labour* addresses the unconditional worst forms of child labour, which in all cases represent extreme violations of children's rights. Labour practices such as child trafficking, debt bondage and forced recruitment into armed conflict, as well as child labour in prostitution, pornography and illicit activities such as the drugs trade, are tragically all too prevalent today. Although it is impossible to know the extent of such activities with any degree of precision, their devastating effects on their child victims are obvious and increasingly being brought to the world's attention.

Just as no country is immune from child labour, similarly none is protected from the effects of shocks to development, such as financial crises, natural disasters, armed conflicts, the HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as effects of economic and social transition. Although such crises are often in the public eye, their impact on children, and in particular on child labour, is still relatively poorly understood. The Global Report shows how children's lives are thrown into turmoil by such events and how they often, as a result, become more vulnerable to child labour.

Part I concludes by exploring, in the light of the foregoing examination of its varied manifestations, why child labour occurs, distinguishing between its immediate, underlying and structural or root causes. The Report shows that poverty, while inextricably linked to child labour, offers neither a straightforward nor a complete explanation for it. The various dimensions of poverty interact with other factors, which act at all levels from the individual girl or boy to the national economy and even beyond, to determine whether and which children work, go to school, do both or do neither. Inadequate social protection coupled with under-resourced, poor quality education systems play a large part in perpetuating child labour. Policy inconsistencies, such as the existence of a gap between the school-leaving age and the minimum age for employment, exacerbate the situation in many countries. Improved understanding of the interlinked causes of child labour paves the way for the design of more effective strategies to combat it. Such strategies are now being introduced and implemented on an unprecedented scale.

Part II of the Report is devoted to a review of the global response to child labour, through action taken at local, national and international levels, focusing on the work of ILO constituents with support from IPEC and other ILO programmes. National governments are, without doubt, the essential players in the abolition of child labour. Political commitment translated into concrete policy change backed by resource allocation in favour of children is the sine qua non for the effective abolition of child labour. In addition to providing the right legal framework, other key areas where governments can make a difference are in strategies for poverty reduction, including investments in social protection, social services and education, and in supporting targeted programmes to eliminate child labour.

Working closely with governments are the social partners – employers' and workers' organizations – who are uniquely placed to understand and to change the realities of the workplace so that child labour simply has no part to play. The Report illustrates the range of the initiatives taken by these organizations in recent years, from which lessons have been learnt for future work. Particularly promising are those initiatives involving strong tripartite partnerships, extending also to other organizations in civil society.

Partnerships operate horizontally at national level and also vertically between national, regional and international players. *A future without child labour* shows how such collaboration helps to build a supportive framework in which effective action to combat child labour can be taken within and between countries. For example, a joint research project between IPEC, UNICEF and the World Bank aims to strengthen the global information base on child labour and its elimination, as well as to enhance national capacities to generate and analyse information. International cooperation is increasingly apparent in the fields of children's rights, education and poverty reduction. Regional cooperation is emerging to combat trafficking and other cross-border phenomena affecting children. Recent agreements to eliminate child labour across entire sectors of economic activity, reached by international organizations of employers and workers together with actors at the national level, embody this spirit of cooperation at all levels. Such joint endeavours surely point the way forward.

Within the ILO, IPEC has been at the forefront of efforts to combat child labour since its establishment in 1992. The programme has undergone remarkable expansion particularly since 2000, and it currently works in 75 countries with 26 donor countries and organizations. IPEC stimulates and facilitates practical action on the ground by its many in-country partners, for example, in the form of ratification of Conventions and subsequent changes in laws and policies, awareness raising and community mobilization and building capacity in the various institutions with responsibility for children and child labour. It also supports direct interventions by government agencies, employers' and workers' organizations, non-governmental organizations and other civil society groups to assist child labourers and their families. From small beginnings in the early years of the programme, in which different approaches to child labour in particular industries and locations were tried and tested on a pilot basis, IPEC has progressively expanded its activities. Over time, policies have been broadened to target ever-larger numbers of children and families across entire geographical areas, industries or economic sectors, and through projects operating at subregional and regional levels.

Time-bound programmes represent the latest step in IPEC's evolution; these aim to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in a country within a specified, and relatively short, period of time (five to ten years). These are ambitious undertakings; nearly 100,000 children are targeted in the first three countries to implement such programmes – El Salvador, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The vast amount of project experience gained by IPEC and its partners over the past ten years could not be summarized in this Report. Instead, examples are given to illustrate the range of approaches applied to address child labour, spanning advocacy and social mobilization, education and training, social protection and welfare, rescue and rehabilitation, and monitoring and enforcement. Important lessons learned are highlighted: for example, the need to understand the problem by thorough research and consulting with a wide range of stakeholders, including children; the need for an integrated approach that combines prevention with rescue and rehabilitation; the need for viable economic alternatives for families to be in place before children are withdrawn from labour; the importance of local ownership of all project interventions; the central role of education in any strategy to combat child labour; and that efforts to combat child labour must be firmly embedded in overall national economic and social policy frameworks.

Part III of the Report traces the contours of a possible ILO action plan to combat child labour, for consideration by the ILO constituents and the Governing Body. It is built on three pillars: reinforcing IPEC's work in advocacy, research and policy, and technical cooperation; mainstreaming the effective abolition of child labour across the ILO to achieve decent work for all and universal respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work; and forging closer partnerships between the ILO and other actors to achieve the shared goal of a world free of child labour.

A future without child labour demonstrates that many of the building blocks to achieve the goal of the effective abolition of child labour are in place and that progress is being made. However, much remains to be done. The ILO calls on all partners in this endeavour to redouble their efforts, to give all children, everywhere, the childhood and the future that they deserve.

Introduction

Child labour: a large-scale violation of children's rights

1. The effective abolition of child labour is one of the most urgent challenges of our time. Today, we have a better grasp of the size and the shape of the problem: of the more than 200 million child labourers worldwide, some 180 million are now suspected to be toiling in the "worst forms" of child labour – those activities that the global community has unanimously agreed are inexcusable under any circumstances and must be eliminated without delay. The persistence on such a scale of this violation of children's basic human rights casts a shadow over us all.

A better understanding of the problem

2. We also have a better understanding of the factors that give rise to child labour and of its consequences. Child labour is clearly detrimental to individual children, preventing them from enjoying their childhood, hampering their development and sometimes causing lifelong physical or psychological damage; it is also detrimental to families, to communities and to society as a whole. As both a result and a cause of poverty, child labour perpetuates disadvantage and social exclusion. It undermines national development by keeping children out of school, preventing them from gaining the education and skills that would enable them as adults to contribute to economic growth and prosperity. As long as child labour continues, the ILO's goal of decent work can never be achieved.

A worldwide movement against child labour

3. In recent years, a sea change in awareness of child labour has occurred across the world and this has strengthened countries' attitudes with regard to its abolition. Little more than a decade ago, child labour was dismissed by many as an inevitable cultural phenomenon, and by some as non-existent. Before the early 1990s, there was no tripartite consensus on the urgency of dealing with child labour. Countries were hesitant to admit that it might exist within their borders, for fear of a negative international reaction, including possible trade sanctions. The situation at that time regarding child labour was largely one of denial, much as it has been for the related occurrence of forced labour.[1]

---

[1] ILO: *Stopping forced labour*, Report of the Director-General, International Labour Conference, 89th Session, Geneva, 2001.

4. A worldwide movement, involving the ILO's constituents – governments and employers' and workers' organizations – and many other partners working together at international, national and local levels, has altered that irrevocably. The end of the cold war created the political space for a franker discussion of the problem. Developing, transition and developed countries are today linked by a shared acknowledgement that child labour touches them all in some form and to some degree, and by partnerships to tackle the problem.

5. The past decade has seen an unprecedented convergence of thought and action around this cause, in recognition of the fact that the abolition of child labour is an issue at the heart of social and economic development and not at its margins. The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has, over its ten years of existence, become the largest single technical cooperation programme of the Organization. The ILO will mark the first World Day against Child Labour on 12 June 2002.

The effective abolition of child labour: one of the four fundamental principles and rights at work

6. It is thus no accident that the effective abolition of child labour features as one of the four principles concerning fundamental rights in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (Annex 1), along with freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. This followed directly on from its earlier inclusion in the indivisible package of rights at work endorsed in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development.[2]

Key milestones in the fight against child labour

7. The world's gathering resolve to combat child labour is evidenced by a number of key milestones and actions:

— the long tradition of ILO standard setting and supervision in the field of child labour, dating from the very first session of the International Labour Conference in 1919 and leading up to the adoption of the umbrella Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138);

— the impetus given by the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989;

— the experience gained by national governments working with IPEC;

— increased activism on child labour by employers' and workers' organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs);

— the unanimous adoption of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the subsequent campaign for its universal ratification and implementation;

— the designation of Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 as fundamental Conventions;

— research and action that have provided new insights into the causes, dimensions and means of reducing both poverty and child labour.

8. Along with wider recognition of the problem of child labour has come better knowledge and understanding of how to tackle it, and the determination to work together towards the common goal of its elimination.

---

[2] The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (1995), Commitment 3(i).

The promotional approach of the ILO Declaration

9. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up reaffirms the framework for member States to respect the principle of the effective abolition of child labour.[3] As the Declaration's preamble notes, "in seeking to maintain the link between social progress and economic growth, the guarantee of fundamental principles and rights at work is of particular significance in that it enables the persons concerned ... to achieve fully their human potential" – a concept that takes on special significance with respect to children and child labour.

10. The obligations set out in the ILO Declaration are reciprocal. On the one hand, member States are obliged, to the best of their resources and fully in line with their specific circumstances, to respect, to promote and to realize the principles of the Declaration concerning fundamental rights. On the other hand, the Organization is obliged to assist its Members to achieve this goal. This is a genuine partnership: where political will exists to eliminate child labour, the ILO will do what it can to support the efforts made by member States to do so. The commitment in the ILO Declaration that "labour standards should not be used for protectionist trade purposes, and that nothing in this Declaration and its follow-up shall be involved or otherwise used for such purposes" has further encouraged countries to seek assistance from the Organization, rather than to try to conceal or deny any problem that might exist. This practice had already started, through IPEC, even before the adoption of the Declaration.

11. The Declaration calls upon the ILO to make full use of its constitutional, operational and budgetary resources to support countries' efforts. Of the four principles in the Declaration, the abolition of child labour has been the one for which the most resources have been mobilized, both internally and externally, thus enabling major support to be provided by the ILO. The wealth of experience gained by IPEC and other ILO programmes, working with a broad range of partners, provides a solid foundation for planning strategies for the future.

The scope of the Global Report

12. As part of the follow-up to the ILO Declaration, this Global Report presents a "dynamic global picture" relating to the effective abolition of child labour.

A stubborn problem that affects all countries

13. Part I traces the development of the worldwide movement against child labour and outlines the scope of the principle of effective abolition. It goes on to review the size and shape of the child labour problem in developing, transition and developed countries, and explores how this is exacerbated by different shocks to development, from HIV/AIDS to natural disasters. It demonstrates how different types of work can pose hazards for children, even some forms of work that, at first sight, might appear to be harmless. Part I concludes by highlighting key elements in our current understanding of the interrelated causes of child labour that together contrive to make this such a stubborn and persistent problem, despite serious efforts to eradicate it.

A wealth of experience in action to fight child labour

14. Part II reviews the growing body of experience in practical action to fight child labour. It examines the critical role of good information as a basis for effective action and considers the support being given at the international level to the fight against child labour, including that of the ILO and, in particular,

---

[3] **The ILO Declaration applies to all member States of the ILO, whether or not they have ratified the Conventions relating to each category of principles concerning fundamental rights. Under the follow-up to the Declaration, a Global Report is to be drawn up each year under the responsibility of the Director-General and to cover one of the four categories of fundamental principles and rights in turn. The purpose of this Global Report is to provide a "dynamic global picture" of the situation and to serve as a basis for assessing the effectiveness of technical assistance and technical cooperation provided by the ILO, and as a basis for the ILO Governing Body to determine technical cooperation priorities and plans of action for the following four-year period.**

IPEC. After outlining the key role played by national governments in demonstrating political commitment and providing the enabling environment for the abolition of child labour, the Report goes on to review action taken by employers' and workers' organizations, governments and other stakeholders, often with the support of IPEC and other ILO programmes. A selection of good practice examples of different forms of intervention against child labour is presented, indicating important lessons learned and laying the groundwork for an assessment of the effectiveness of ILO assistance in this field.

Priorities for future ILO technical cooperation

15. With a view to assisting the ILO Governing Body to determine priorities for future technical cooperation, Part III of the Report outlines a possible action plan against child labour built around three pillars: reinforcing the work of IPEC, mainstreaming child labour in the Decent Work Agenda and forging closer partnerships among the many actors working in this field.

16. Part III also presents suggested points for discussion at the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2002.

Progress made but no room for complacency

17. This first Global Report on the effective abolition of child labour under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration charts the significant progress that has been made towards achieving this goal but reveals that there is still a considerable way to go. The evidence presented affords more than ample reason for the ILO and its partners to redouble their efforts to create a world free of child labour.

Part I. Child labour: A dynamic global picture

1. Child labour: What is to be abolished, and why?

A long history of ILO work against child labour

An issue at the heart of the ILO agenda

18. The International Labour Organization, from its inception, has made child labour one of its central concerns.[1] ILO work on child labour over the decades has mainly taken its cue from the phrase "protection of children" in the Preamble to its Constitution. The ILO's prime tool in pursuing the abolition of child labour has always been, and remains to this day, the labour standards that embody the concept of a minimum age to enter into employment. This approach responds to two concerns: to protect children from work that interferes with their full development and to pursue economic efficiency through well-functioning adult labour markets.

The critical link between minimum age and education

19. Early minimum age standards were linked to schooling.[2] The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), which built on the ten instruments adopted before the Second World War, expresses this tradition by stating that the minimum age for entry into employment should not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling. By establishing such a link, the aim is to ensure that children's human capital is developed to its fullest potential, benefiting children themselves, their families and communities and society as a whole by the increased contribution they can, when grown, make to economic growth and social development.

A growing consensus

20. Soon after the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in March 1995, had squarely identified the elimination of child labour as a key to sustainable social development and poverty reduction, the ILO Governing Body approved, in 1996, the development of a new ILO instrument

---

[1] Two child labour instruments were among the six adopted at the First Session of the International Labour Conference in 1919: the Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 5), and the Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 6).

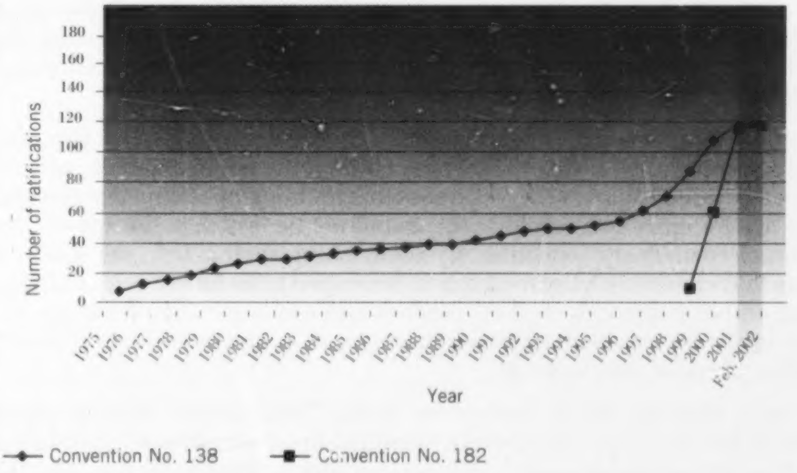
[2] For example, the Minimum Age (Sea) Convention, 1920 (No. 7), the Minimum Age (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 10), and the Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment) Convention, 1932 (No. 33).

on the subject. The aim of such an instrument was to consolidate the growing consensus, fuelled in part by the ILO's own increasing work under its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC),[3] that certain forms of child labour demanded urgent, immediate action for their prohibition and elimination. Preparatory work began in earnest for a new Convention and Recommendation;[4] and ideas for such instruments were subsequently discussed within the ILO and at other international meetings in Amsterdam and Oslo the following year.

Unanimous adoption of Convention No. 182: an unprecedented pace of ratification

21. In 1998, the adoption by the 86th Session of the International Labour Conference of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up reconfirmed the effective abolition of child labour as one of the principles concerning the fundamental rights to be respected by all ILO member States, even if they had not ratified the fundamental Conventions.[5] At that same session of the Conference, debate began on the proposed new child labour instruments and, as witnessed by the Global March Against Child Labour, children themselves decried their treatment at work. The unanimous adoption of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 190), marked yet another milestone in the movement against child labour. The momentum has since continued. The speed of ratification of Convention No. 182 is unparalleled in the history of the ILO (by 1 February 2002, 115 ratifications had been registered) (see Annex 2). With these ratifications have come many more ratifications of Convention No. 138, which had reached a total of 116 by the same date (see figure 1 and Annex 2).

Figure 1. Number of ratifications of Conventions Nos. 138 and 182, by year (to 1 February 2002)



---

[3] IPEC was established in 1992 with an initial grant from the Government of Germany. It built on work undertaken by an earlier interdepartmental project of the ILO.

[4] ILO: *Child labour: Targeting the intolerable*, Report VI (1), International Labour Conference, 86th Session, Geneva, 1998.

[5] After the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development in 1995, the ILO reclassified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), which only a few years previously had been seen as a technical ILO standard, as a basic human rights instrument (one of the fundamental Conventions).

Rapid growth of IPEC's programme of support to member States

22. Meanwhile, IPEC's expansion has accelerated; it now represents a coalition of almost 100 countries, including 26 donor governments and organizations and more than 70 countries with active programmes to combat child labour (see Annex 3). The 89th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2001 saw the launch of the latest development in IPEC – the first three time-bound programmes on the worst forms of child labour.[6] New data revealing the extent of the worst forms of child labour confirm the priority that such programmes merit.

23. These and other milestones along the way reflect the serious commitment and hard work of many groups and individuals within the ILO and outside it. Such efforts form part of the dynamic global picture to be presented in this Report. However, let us first consider the meaning of the term *child labour*, the effective abolition of which is called for in the ILO Declaration.

What do we want to abolish?

24. While the principles of the ILO Declaration do not equate with the more detailed provisions of the fundamental Conventions of the ILO, there is a definite link between the two.[7] Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 establish the boundaries of the work by children that is targeted for effective abolition.

Legitimate work by children

25. The term *child labour* does not encompass all work performed by children under the age of 18. Millions of young people legitimately undertake work, paid or unpaid, that is appropriate for their age and level of maturity. By so doing, they learn to take responsibility, they gain skills and add to their families' and their own well-being and income, and they contribute to their countries' economies. Child labour does not include activities such as helping out, after school is over and schoolwork has been done, with light household or garden chores, childcare or other light work. To claim otherwise only trivializes the genuine deprivation of childhood faced by the millions of children involved in the child labour that must be effectively abolished.

Three categories of child labour for abolition

26. Child labour slated for abolition falls into the following three categories:

(1) Labour that is performed by a child who is **under the minimum age** specified for that kind of work (as defined by national legislation, in accordance with accepted international standards), and that is thus likely to impede the child's education and full development.

(2) Labour that jeopardizes the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, either because of its nature or because of the conditions in which it is carried out, known as **hazardous** work.

(3) The **unconditional worst forms of child labour**, which are internationally defined as slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, and illicit activities.

A universal commitment to effective abolition

27. Under the Declaration, the elimination of all these forms of child labour has become the shared goal of every one of the ILO's 175 member States. It is also an objective of the Organization as a whole, which has pledged, in the same instrument, to assist its Members to realize the principle of the effective abolition of child labour. This is the focus of IPEC. The prohibition of child

---

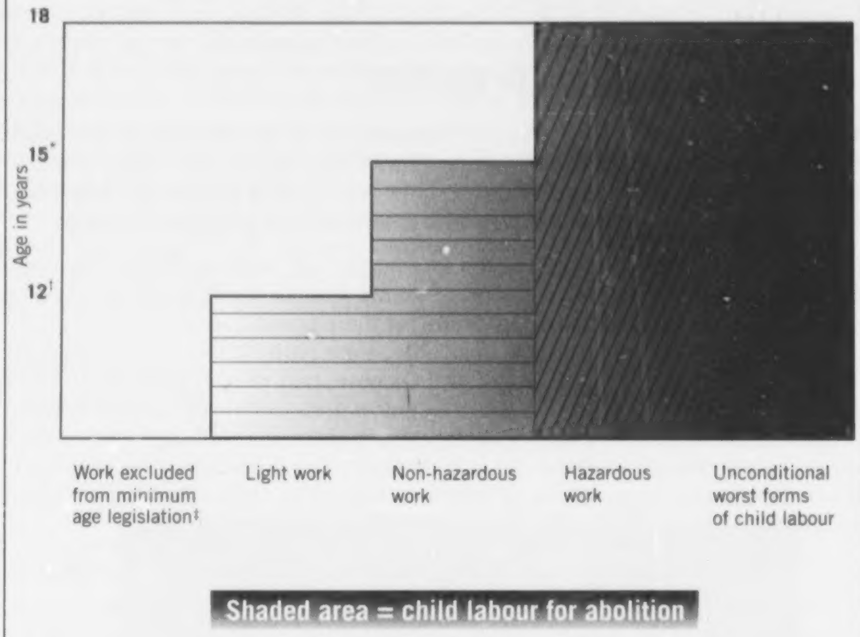
[6] Time-bound programmes were launched in El Salvador, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania, with financial assistance from the Government of the United States. Similar programmes are being prepared in 15 additional countries.

[7] The link is explained in paragraph 1(b) of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

labour applies to a wide range of economic and non-economic activities; policy responses must be designed accordingly. To take an extreme example, the measures to rescue a 7-year-old being used as a "mule" in the drugs trade will have little in common with those to prevent a school-going teenager undertaking some additional, but unlawful, hours of work in an office job.

28. Figure 2 illustrates the basic distinctions embodied in Conventions Nos. 138 and 182. It shows that it is the interaction between the type of work and the age of the child involved that defines the boundaries of child labour for effective abolition.

Figure 2. Basic distinctions in ILO child labour standards


18
15*
Age in years
12†
Work excluded from minimum age legislation‡
Light work
Non-hazardous work
Hazardous work
Unconditional worst forms of child labour
Shaded area = child labour for abolition

[*] The minimum age for admission to employment or work is determined by national legislation and can be set at 14, 15 or 16 years.

[†] The minimum age at which light work is permissible can be set at 12 or 13 years.

[‡] For example, household chores, work in family undertakings and work undertaken as part of education.

Minimum age for admission to employment

29. Let us turn first to the concept of minimum age for admission to employment or work. With the aim of abolishing child labour, national legislation should fix a minimum age or ages at which children can enter into different kinds of work. Within limits, these ages may vary according to national social and economic circumstances. The general minimum age for admission to employment should not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and should not be less than 15 years; but 16 years is the general minimum age to which countries should aspire. Developing countries may make exceptions to this and may apply a minimum age of 14 years. Light work that is compatible with a child's schooling may be allowed from age 12. Children who engage in work when they have not yet attained the minimum age specified for it are classed as child labourers.

The worst forms of child labour

The worst forms of child labour

30. The adoption of Convention No. 182 helped to focus the spotlight on the urgency of action to eliminate, as a priority, the worst forms of child labour, which it defines as:

(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

(b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;

(c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;

(d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (Article 3).

31. A distinction can be drawn between two categories of the worst forms of child labour:

— those that this report terms the "unconditional" worst forms of child labour, referred to in Article 3(a)-(c) of Convention No. 182 above, that are so fundamentally at odds with children's basic human rights that they are absolutely prohibited for all persons under the age of 18;

— hazardous work, as defined by national legislation, that may be conducted in legitimate sectors of economic activity but that is nonetheless damaging to the child worker.

Short- and long-term measures needed

32. These worst forms of child labour entail violations of children's rights that demand immediate action for their prohibition. For example, as current and former child labourers recently reported to IPEC, they were "sometimes beaten by their employers and exposed to physical injuries at work, denied wages, forced to work long hours and sexually abused".[8]

33. However, such forms of exploitation of children also highlight the necessity of effective poverty reduction measures and long-term, sustained economic growth for their prevention. It is abundantly clear that the poverty conundrum at the very heart of this problem – where poverty breeds the worst forms of child labour and the worst forms of child labour breed poverty – must be tackled head on.

Focus on children as well as on work

34. The concept of the worst forms of child labour helps to focus attention on children, as well as on the work they perform. These forms of child labour are not only the most intrinsically harmful, they are also the ones that are performed by the most vulnerable children.[9] The boundaries of hazardous work are therefore not always easy to draw, especially when the harm being done to children is not obvious in the short term. Hazardous work had already been singled out in Convention No. 138 as requiring a minimum age for admission of 18 years or older (Article 3(1)). Its identification as a worst form of child labour adds impetus to the drive to eliminate it.

How work can harm children

35. Work may harm a child through the task itself, the tools used, the hours or conditions of work, or any other factor that affects his or her physical, men-

---

[8] IPEC: *Project document: Supporting the Time-Bound Programme on the worst forms of child labour in the United Republic of Tanzania* (Geneva, ILO, 2001), subsection 1.3.4.

[9] See, for example, ILO: *Child labour*, Report IV (2A), International Labour Conference, 87th Session, Geneva, 1999, reply received from the United States, p. 17.

tal, emotional, psychological, moral or spiritual development. Health and safety hazards for workers under the age of 18 are greater than those for adults. Because of their process of growth and development, children are more susceptible to occupational hazards; and exposure to dust, chemicals and other substances, as well as physical strain, can cause irreversible damage to their growing bodies.[10] Chronic physical strain on growing bones and joints causes stunting, spinal injury and other lifelong deformation. Moreover, tasks that are harmless for well-built, well-fed children may harm those who are malnourished.

36. Even seemingly light work can be dangerous for children who are exhausted at the end of a long working day. Lack of maturity and experience may lead children to take or accept risks that their older colleagues would know to avoid, and machinery and tools designed with adults in mind are unlikely to be adapted to the physical and mental capacities of younger workers. There may be other, less obvious but nonetheless debilitating effects on children of work that, at first sight, appears innocuous, such as heatstroke incurred through long hours herding animals or exposure to agrochemicals through vegetable cultivation.

Need for more medical evidence

37. The physiological damage from exposure to different substances and work processes is relatively well known for adult workers,[11] but more needs to be learned about the short- and long-term effects of different types of work on girls and boys of various ages and health status.[12] Such understanding is needed in order to decide what types of work to prohibit for children under the age of 18 and to plan for appropriate rehabilitation of children who are withdrawn from hazardous work. More detailed scientific evidence may well reveal there to be more hazardous forms of work for children than was initially believed, in all countries, whatever their levels of development.

Occupational injury and death among children

38. The rates of occupational injury and death reveal the consequences of the hazards faced by workers under the age of 18. Statistics are patchy but evidence can be found in studies in developed countries, which have examined hospital records and awards under workers' compensation schemes. In the **United States**, the rate of injury per hour worked appears to be almost twice as high for children and adolescents as it is for adults. Rates of work-related deaths of young workers during 1992-98 in the United States were highest in agriculture, forestry and fishing, followed by retail trade and construction.[13] A survey of children aged 13-17 in **Denmark**, **Finland**, **Norway** and **Sweden** in 1997-98, revealed injury rates ranging from 3 to 19 per cent for children working before or after school.[14] In **Denmark**, the accident rate among children working in agriculture is reportedly higher than it is in other sectors.[15] A number of developed countries have referred to statistics of occupational injuries and deaths of workers under the age of 18 in their annual reports under the follow-up to the Declaration, including **Australia**, **New Zealand** and the

---

[10] V. Forastieri: *Children at work: Health and safety risks* (Geneva, ILO, 1997), p. 10.

[11] ILO: *Encyclopaedia of occupational health and safety*, 4th ed., 4 vols. (Geneva, ILO, 1998).

[12] An example of what has been done can be found in N. Burra: *Born to work: Child labour in India* (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995).

[13] P.J. Landrigran et al.: "Child labour in the United States: Historical background and current crisis", in *The Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine* (New York, Mount Sinai Hospital), 1992, Vol. 59, No. 6, pp. 498-503.

[14] G.L. Rafnsdóttir: *Barn- och ungdomsarbete I Norden [Child and youth work in Nordic countries]* (Copenhagen, Nordic Council, 1999).

[15] ILO: *Note on the Proceedings*, Tripartite Meeting on Moving to Sustainable Agricultural Development through the Modernization of Agriculture and Employment in a Globalized Economy, Sectoral Activities Programme (TMAD/2000/13), Geneva, 18-22 September 2000. Statement by the representative of the Government of Denmark, p. 23.

United States. The ILO itself has conducted surveys on work-related injuries and illnesses sustained by children. A study in 1997 in selected developing countries revealed the following average rates of illness and injury among working children by economic sector: 25.6 per cent in construction (34.8 per cent for girls), 18.1 per cent in transport, storage and communication, 15.9 per cent in mining and quarrying (20.8 per cent for girls) and 12.2 per cent in agriculture (15.5 per cent for girls).[16] In all these sectors, with the exception of transport, rates were significantly higher for girls than they were for boys.

39. While information on this subject is not sufficient, what we do have clearly indicates that children and adolescents are highly susceptible to illness, injury and even death through hazardous work in developing, transition and developed countries alike.

Evolving attitudes towards children

Differing perceptions of children over time and across cultures

40. Perceptions of children have evolved over time: children are now viewed less as passive objects of adult concern and more as human beings with rights of their own. It is of course true that concepts about children and childhood, including what is allowed and expected of children of different ages, maturity and gender, vary widely across and within countries and cultures; there is no "universal" child. In industrialized countries, for example, some teenagers are not expected even to look after themselves, while in many poor countries, quite young children shoulder considerable responsibility within the household.[17] Indeed, as we will see later in this report, in those parts of the world most affected by HIV/AIDS, alarming numbers of children are becoming de facto heads of households, taking full responsibility for the well-being of their younger siblings.

A convergence of thinking

41. Yet there has been, over recent years, an undoubted convergence of thinking about children, marked by the adoption in 1989 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), now almost universally ratified. Amongst many other rights,[18] it recognizes "the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education", and it endorses the ILO concept of a minimum age. It thus confirms the ILO's long-standing recognition of children's particular vulnerability to exploitative work because of their powerlessness compared to adults and hence the inability to protect their own interests.[19] The CRC also defines a child as "every human being below the age of eighteen years" and sets the seal on children's right to participate and to have their views taken into account in matters that affect them.[20]

---

[16] K. Ashagrie: *Statistics on working children and hazardous child labour in brief* (Geneva, ILO, 1997), table 6.

[17] As reflected, for example, in the way the rights and responsibilities of children are considered in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Organization of African Unity, 1990).

[18] The rights of the child in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) can be grouped under survival and development rights, protection rights and civil and political rights.

[19] ILO: *Report of the Director-General*, International Labour Conference, 69th Session, Geneva, 1983, p. 12.

[20] A good summary of the extensive literature on children's participation appears in R. Hart: *Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship* (New York, UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1992). The Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190), which accompanies Convention No. 182, reflects recognition of children's right to participate: "the programmes of action ... should be designed and implemented ... taking into consideration the views of the children directly affected by the worst forms of child labour, their families and, as appropriate, other concerned groups ..." (Paragraph 2).

2. The size and shape of the problem in 2002

The challenges of measuring child labour

Research – an essential, not a luxury

42. If action to abolish child labour is to be effective, it must be based on a thorough understanding of the size and shape of the problem. As a complex social and economic phenomenon, child labour has always presented challenges for conventional research methods. With world attention now focused on the worst forms of child labour, it is all the more essential to have good quality information available on which to base policy and programme design.

Box 2.1

Collecting data about children: Some reflections and challenges

Qualitative and quantitative data are indivisible. It is not possible to count something until there is first a definition of what is to be counted – therefore the issue must be understood qualitatively. Questions cannot be framed for surveys without knowing what words and concepts will be understood by community members, including children. Statistics can only be correctly interpreted through an understanding of the context in which they have been generated. Collection of qualitative data is particularly important for the worst forms of child labour, which will not yield up their secrets to customary forms of survey based on the workplace or household and using questionnaires or similar conventional instruments.

Data about children and their lives are still inadequate. Children are often effectively excluded from official statistics, which tend to focus on adults or formal institutions rather than on children. For example, children may be merely counted as members of households or as students in schools. Even where data on children are available, they may not be disaggregated by sex, age or other groupings, which would allow an understanding of the differences in situations and needs between these groups. Different government agencies often collect information for distinct purposes, using various age groupings, methods and time periods, so that the data sometimes cannot be centrally managed, shared or compared. National-level statistics are frequently not disaggregated to the levels at which programme interventions are planned and implemented (e.g. districts, sectors or villages) and this makes it difficult to undertake proper needs assessment, to target interventions and to evaluate their impact.

A major difficulty lies in counting and researching the many children working in the informal economy, in private homes, in family enterprises and in illegal and hidden activities. For a long time, the lack of reliable methods of measurement and the absence of statistics on child labour were serious impediments to its effective abolition. The situation has improved considerably in recent years, but there is still some way to go.

Progress in child labour research

43. The ILO has made considerable strides over the years in assisting member States and other partners to collect and disseminate information about child labour, using innovative research methods. Since 1979, when a large number of country studies were commissioned for the International Year of the Child, there has been an ongoing programme of child labour research providing new insights through counting, describing and analysing the work of children in a variety of economic settings.[21] This work was given a boost in 1998 with the launch of the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) within IPEC. ILO constituents, other international organizations, NGOs, academics, activists and others have all contributed to the rapidly expanding knowledge base about child labour.[22]

The number of child labourers in the world today

The "250 million" estimate of 1995

44. The ILO estimated that in 1995 some 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 were working (i.e. "economically active"[23]) in the developing world; at least 120 million of these children were working full time. This undoubtedly helped to raise public awareness of the scale of the problem and to promote action against it.[24] These estimates were based on the data available at that time, primarily from replies to special questionnaires sent to national statistical offices and some experimental child labour surveys, along with published labour force and population statistics. While neither estimate corresponded to the global number of "child labourers" (according to the provisions of Convention No. 138), they nonetheless gave a clear indication of the magnitude of the problem to be tackled.

New ILO estimates of child labour

45. The time is now ripe to update and refine the estimates, and to make an attempt – in full recognition of data and methodological constraints – to assess the number of children involved in the often hidden worst forms of labour. New estimates by the ILO now provide us with an updated, more complete picture of the child labour problem across the world.

Methodology for estimation

More refined estimates now possible

46. A single estimate of economically active children does not capture the various kinds and intensities of work in which children are involved. Esti-

---

[21] Recent research outputs by IPEC can be accessed on the IPEC web site: www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/

[22] The ILO's bibliographic database, LABORDOC (www.ilo.org/public/english/support/lib/labordoc/) contains some 2,200 references to child labour.

[23] "Economic activity" is a broad concept that encompasses most productive activities undertaken by children, whether for the market or not, paid or unpaid, for a few hours or full time, on a casual or regular basis, legal or illegal; it excludes chores undertaken in the child's own household and schooling. To be counted as economically active, a child must have worked for at least one hour on any day during a seven-day reference period. "Economically active" children is a statistical, rather than a legal, definition. It is not the same as the "child labour" referred to with regard to abolition.

[24] ILO: *Child labour: Targeting the intolerable*, op.cit., p. 7; and K. Ashagrie: *Statistics on working children*, op.cit.

mates were therefore made of the number of children (aged under 18) engaged in the following categories of economic activity, for the year 2000:

— children engaged in any type of economic activity, including for short periods of time, and in light work;

— children engaged in all types of child labour to be abolished;[25]

— children engaged in hazardous work which, because of its nature or the number of hours worked, jeopardizes their health, safety or morals;[26] and

— children engaged in the unconditional worst forms of child labour.[27]

Figure 3 shows the numbers of children involved in these different categories of economic activity, according to age group.

47. Various statistical data, including national SIMPOC surveys of child labour and other household and community surveys such as the surveys conducted under the World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS), were used to estimate the numbers of children engaged in all types of economic activity, in all types of child labour to be abolished and in hazardous work. Statistical techniques were applied to allow extrapolation from national data sets. For the worst forms of child labour, global estimates were based on an assessment and aggregation of existing national and regional estimates for each worst form.[28]

Global estimates

The aggregate global estimates

48. The global estimates for the year 2000 are:

- Of an estimated 211 million children aged 5-14 engaged in some form of economic activity, **186 million children are engaged in child labour to be abolished (including in its worst forms)**.
- Of an estimated 141 million children aged 15-17 engaged in economic activity, **59 million children are engaged in child labour**.[29]

---

[25] In line with ILO Convention No. 138 and Recommendation No. 146, and Convention No. 182 and Recommendation No. 190. This includes all economically active children aged 5-14, except those aged 12-14 engaged in light work only (for statistical purposes, defined as less than 14 hours of work per week), and all children aged 15-17 engaged in hazardous and other worst forms of child labour (see below).

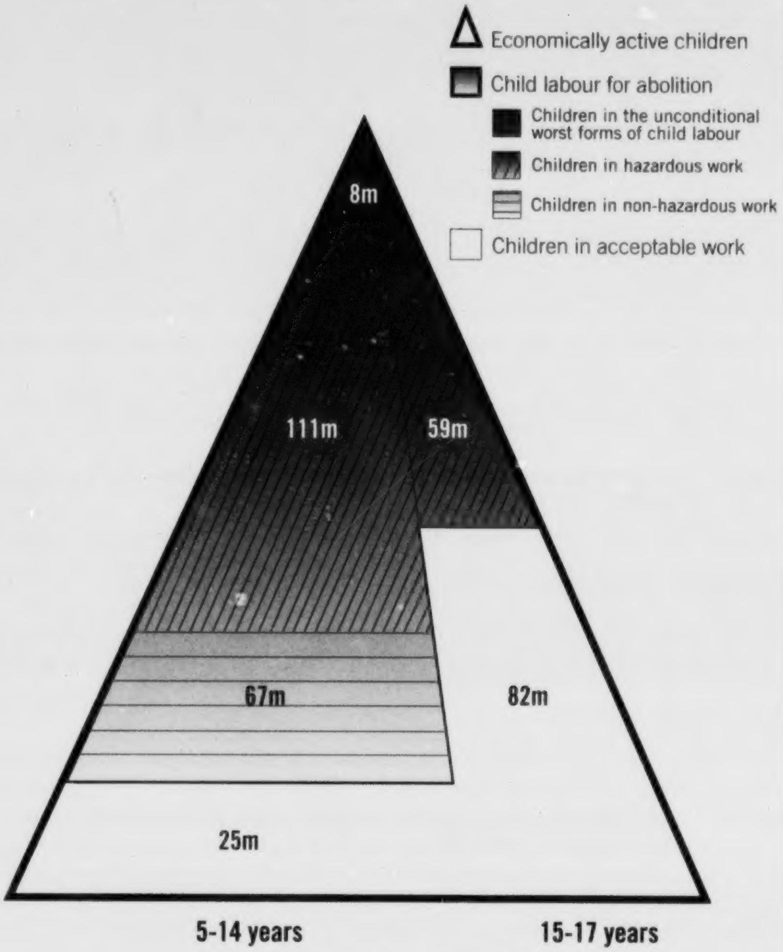
[26] Children in hazardous work comprises all children aged 5-17: (a) working in the mining and construction sectors; (b) working in other occupations or processes considered as hazardous by their nature or the circumstances in which they are carried out; and (c) working excessive hours (for statistical purposes, defined as 43 hours or more a week).

[27] As defined in Convention No. 182, Article 3(a)-(c), "(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties".

[28] Estimates for this last category were based on a wide range of sources, which were collected, screened and validated to ascertain which were considered sufficiently reliable for inclusion in the overall calculation. These estimates may significantly underestimate the numbers of children involved in these hidden forms of labour. They must therefore be treated with caution.

[29] Child labourers in the 15-17-year age group are necessarily involved in the worst forms of child labour (either unconditional worst forms or hazardous work) as they are above the minimum age for entry into all other forms of work.

Figure 3. The pyramid of working children: children involved in the different categories of economic activity (millions)



Shaded area = child labour for abolition

49. Table 1 and figure 3 present a detailed breakdown of the aggregate figures, by economic category of activity and by the age group of the children involved.

Gender differences in child labour

50. The global estimates of economically active children and those involved in child labour or in hazardous work are broken down into the numbers of girls and boys involved. Girls and boys are equally involved in economic activity up to the age of 14, but above this age, the proportion of boys increases. Boys' involvement in child labour is higher than that of girls in both age groups, and particularly among older children in hazardous work (table 2).

The unconditional worst forms of child labour

51. Available estimates of children's involvement in the unconditional worst forms of child labour indicate a global total of at least 8.4 million girls and boys of all ages. The majority of these (two-thirds of the total) is thought to be trapped in forms of forced and bonded labour. Approximately one-fifth, nearly

Table 1. Numbers and percentages of children engaged in economic activity, child labour and worst forms of child labour in 2000 (by age)

	5-14 years		15-17 years		Total	
	Number (millions)	Percentage of age group	Number (millions)	Percentage of age group	Number (millions)	Percentage of age group
Economically active children	210.8	18	140.9	42	351.7	23
of which: Child labourers	186.3	16	59.2	18	245.5	16
■ of which: Children in worst forms of child labour	—	—	—	—	178.9	11.5
■ Children in hazardous work	111.3	9	59.2	18	170.5	11
■ Children in unconditional worst forms	—	—	—	—	8.4	0.5

— = figures not available.

Source: ILO estimates for 2000 and *World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision. Vol. 2. The sex and age distribution of the world population* (New York, United Nations, 2001).

Table 2. Percentage of girls in economic activity, child labour and hazardous work

		5-14 years	15-17 years	Total
Economically active children		50	47	49
of which:	Child labourers	49	42	48
	of which:			
	■ Children in hazardous work	47	42	45

Source: ILO estimates for 2000.

Table 3. Estimated number of children involved in the unconditional worst forms of child labour

Type of worst form of child labour	Global number of children (in millions)
Forced and bonded labour	5.7
Forced recruitment into armed conflict	0.3
Prostitution and pornography	1.8
Other illicit activities	0.6
Trafficked children [1]	(1.2)
Total	8.4

[1] Children are generally trafficked into another worst form of child labour. Therefore, the number of trafficked children cannot be included in a calculation of the total number of children in the worst forms of child labour, as this would result in double-counting.

Source: ILO estimates for 2000 based on various secondary sources.

2 million children, are believed to be exploited through prostitution and pornography (table 3).

Estimates of economically active children

Estimates by economic or regional grouping

52. Estimates by economic or regional grouping are possible only at the level of economically active children. These estimates are presented in table 4 for children aged 5-14. In the absence of more complete data on child labour, these estimates provide a proxy measure.

Table 4. Estimates of economically active children (aged 5-14) in 2000[1]

Region	Number of economically active children (millions)	Percentage of global total by group	Percentage of economically active children in total child population [1]
Developed (industrialized) economies	2.5	1	2
Transition economies	2.4	1	4
Asia and the Pacific	127.3	60	19
Latin America and the Caribbean	17.4	8	16
Sub-Saharan Africa	48	23	29
Middle East and North Africa	13.4	6	15
Total	211	—	16

[1] These estimates are prone to higher error rates than the corresponding global estimates as a result of the reduced number of data sets available for their calculation. Rounding errors mean that percentage totals do not equal 100. The groupings follow the categories adopted in the ILO Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM). The total number of children aged 5-14 in the world in 2000 was approximately 1,200 million, of which the Asia-Pacific region accounted for 28 per cent and sub-Saharan Africa for 7.4 per cent.

Sources: ILO Bureau of Statistics: Data for 2000 based on 29 national household surveys; ILO: The ILO economically active population estimates and projections (LABPROJ), see www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/info/dbases.htm; and United Nations Population Division: *World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision. Vol. 2. The sex and age distribution of the world population* (New York, United Nations, 2001).

Can we compare the new and the old estimates of working children?

What has happened to child labour between 1995 and 2000?

53. If we subtract the numbers of economically active children in the developed and transition economies from the global estimate of 211 million, we arrive at a figure of 206 million for the developing economies. It might then be tempting to make a comparison between the 1995 and the 2000 global estimates – and thereby conclude that the number of economically active children (5-14 years) in the developing economies has decreased from 250 million to 206 million, and that the situation must therefore be improving in many countries.

54. It is undeniable that the 2000 estimate for economically active children is less than the 1995 estimate. However, because very different methods and data sources were used for the two computations, the conclusions that can be drawn from a straight comparison of the two figures are limited. Two basic propositions (not mutually exclusive) are possible:

(1) The difference between the estimates reflects the different and improved methods and data used to compute the 2000 estimate.

(2) The difference reflects an actual decline in the number of working children across the world.

Some grounds for optimism

55. It is not possible to know which of the above propositions carries most weight in explaining the difference between the 1995 and 2000 estimates. However, the size of the difference between them (44 million or a decrease of almost 20 per cent) might suggest that indeed there has been a global reduction in the number of children working over this five-year period, giving some grounds for cautious optimism that the measures being taken to combat child labour, considered in Part II of this Report, are having an effect.

What do the estimates tell us about child labour in the world today?

New insights into child labour

56. The main value of the new estimates lies in the insight they give us into the dimensions of the child labour to be abolished. They show us clearly that, while some progress may have been made, there is no room for complacency. Although it is not the purpose of the Global Report to provide a detailed analysis, some of the main conclusions that emerge from an initial look at the new estimates can be highlighted.

57. First, *child labour persists on a very large scale*. Although numerous young people are engaged in work that is consistent with their full development, many more are being harmed by child labour. The estimates indicate that there are some 186 million child labourers aged 5-14, and 59 million aged 15-17 worldwide; on average, one child in every six aged 5-17 can be classed as a child labourer.[30]

58. Second, *the extent of the worst forms of child labour, particularly hazardous work, appears to be more serious than was previously thought*. More than two-thirds of the total number of child labourers, i.e. one in eight children across the world, or a total of nearly 180 million children, are exploited in the worst forms of work.

59. Third, it is especially alarming that *almost two-thirds (or 111 million) of the children who are engaged in hazardous work are less than 15 years old*, and so should be immediately withdrawn from this work. This still leaves some 59 million young workers between 15 and 17 years old who are exposed to hazards at work, and who urgently need either immediate protection from the dangers they face or to be withdrawn totally from such work.

60. Fourth, *there are still major problems of data availability and reliability for the unconditional worst forms of child labour*. While the estimates represent a best attempt, with the methods and data currently available, to quantify children's exploitation under the unconditional worst forms of child labour, the ILO is keenly aware of their limitations. Further research, using new methods, is urgently needed. There will always, however, be severe limits to the accurate measurement of these essentially clandestine activities.

61. Fifth, with regard to the gender dimensions of the global estimates, *at all ages, boys have a slightly higher level of involvement in child labour than girls and the proportion of boys involved increases with age*. Boys represent around 60 per cent of the children aged 12 years and over in hazardous work.

62. Sixth, the estimates according to economic or regional groupings for economically active children (as a proxy for child labour) indicate where the problem is most serious. The Asia-Pacific region harbours the largest absolute number of working children (5-14 years), some 127 million or 60 per cent of the total, followed by sub-Saharan Africa with 23 per cent of the total. However, the intensity of the problem is highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where 29 per cent of all children under 15 are at work, compared to 19 per cent in Asia and the Pacific. Children are also economically active in transition and developed countries, although in much smaller absolute numbers and proportions.

Child labour – a key new development indicator

63. The human dimension of these aggregate statistics is difficult to comprehend and convey. In a very real sense, a single child subjected to child labour, especially to its worst forms, is one too many. But the estimates show that child

---

[30] **Population figures for this calculation were derived from *World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision. Vol. 2. The sex and age distribution of the world population* (New York, United Nations, 2001).**

labour remains a problem on a massive scale. We have surely reached a moment in history where the absolute number of child labourers, and the proportion of a country's children who are subject to child labour, particularly to its worst forms, should become key indicators of economic and social development.

A better grasp of the shape of the problem

64. Numbers of child labourers alone paint only part of the picture. While it is important to know how many children globally are involved in different types of labour, to help them we need to know where they are, what their work involves and how it is affecting them.

All countries are affected to some extent

65. Contrary to popular opinion, child labour is not confined to developing or poor countries: it is found in all countries, to a greater or lesser extent. The ILO's new estimates indicate that nearly 3 per cent of children in the 10-14-year age group in developed countries are economically active, as are just over 4 per cent of children in transition countries (see table 4). In the review of annual reports under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration for 2002, at least five governments of developed countries acknowledged the suspected existence of one or more of the worst forms of child labour in their country.[31] It is clear that economic growth does not automatically lead to the disappearance of child labour, as is too often assumed. However, the problem is most critical in developing countries.

Distorted popular perceptions of the problem

66. Popular perceptions of where children work can easily be distorted by uneven coverage in the media and other sources of public information. For example, much attention has been paid in literature and advocacy to the involvement of children in export-oriented manufacturing, and in international activities such as sex tourism. Yet it is estimated that only 5 per cent of child labourers work in formal-economy, export-related jobs,[32] and commercial sexual exploitation of children is dominated by local rather than by foreign customers.[33]

A stubborn phenomenon

67. It is also important to remember that, far from being static, children's involvement in the labour market is constantly changing. Individual children move in and out of school and work, and between different types and intensities of work depending, for example, on the season, the immediate cash needs of the family, and where income opportunities are perceived to exist. At the macro-level, the market for child labour is constantly evolving, in the context of globalization, and demographic and attitudinal change. Experience teaches us that child labour is a very stubborn problem: its abolition in one economic sector may be accompanied by its re-emergence in another, and nowhere has it been completely abolished.

---

[31] In the introduction to the review of annual reports under the follow-up to the Declaration for 2002, the Expert-Advisers remarked that "modernization and high per capita incomes do not, by themselves, lead to the disappearance of all forms of child labour". See ILO: *Review of annual reports under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* (subsequently referred to as ILO Review of annual reports under the Declaration), *Part I. Introduction by the ILO Declaration Expert-Advisers to the compilation of annual reports*, Governing body doc. GB. 283/3/1 (Geneva 2002) p. 32.

[32] S.L. Bachman: "A new economics of child labour: Searching for answers behind the headlines", in *Journal of International Affairs* (New York), Vol. 53, No. 2 (Spring, 2000), pp. 545-572.

[33] L.L. Lim (ed.): *The sex sector: The economic and social bases of prostitution in South-East Asia* (Geneva, ILO, 1998).

68. The following review of the main types of work undertaken by children around the world today helps us to understand better the "who, what and where" behind the principle of the effective abolition of child labour. It does not pretend to be a comprehensive overview of child labour in the world today. Rather, it provides some glimpses into different manifestations of the problem – in order to present a background for examination in Part II of the action taken against child labour.

69. The review starts by looking at children's participation in legitimate sectors of economic activity, in which the activity per se is not illegal, but the type of work or the conditions in which it is performed by children, and the age of those children, may mean that they are victims of child labour or even of its worst forms because of the hazards to which they are exposed. The review then looks at the forms of child labour that, by their very nature, constitute worst forms.

The sectors in which children work

Most children work in the agricultural sector

70. Surveys in developing countries tell us that the vast majority (70 per cent) of children who work (i.e. are economically active), are engaged in agriculture, fishing, hunting and forestry.[34] Less than 9 per cent are involved in manufacturing, and the same number in wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels. This is followed by community, social and personal services, including domestic work (6.5 per cent) and transport, storage and communication (4 per cent). Around 3 per cent of children are involved in construction, mining and quarrying combined (figure 4).

Details shed light on child labour problem

71. However, questions need to be asked about these aggregate figures. For example, exactly what types of activity are being undertaken by children in these different sectors? How many and which boys and girls are at risk of physical or other harm through their work, and what kinds of harm? Is work in mining (regarded as a hazardous sector) necessarily more damaging than that in agriculture? How many children are working full time or combining their economic activity with schooling, and how many have had their education suffer because of their work? What are the gender and age differences in participation in different types of work? Are there differences along lines of ethnicity, race, class or other social group? Only when we can examine these details will we be able really to understand the dynamic forces behind the child labour that we are trying to abolish, and how to go about achieving that goal.

Domination of the informal economy

The informal economy harbours most child labour

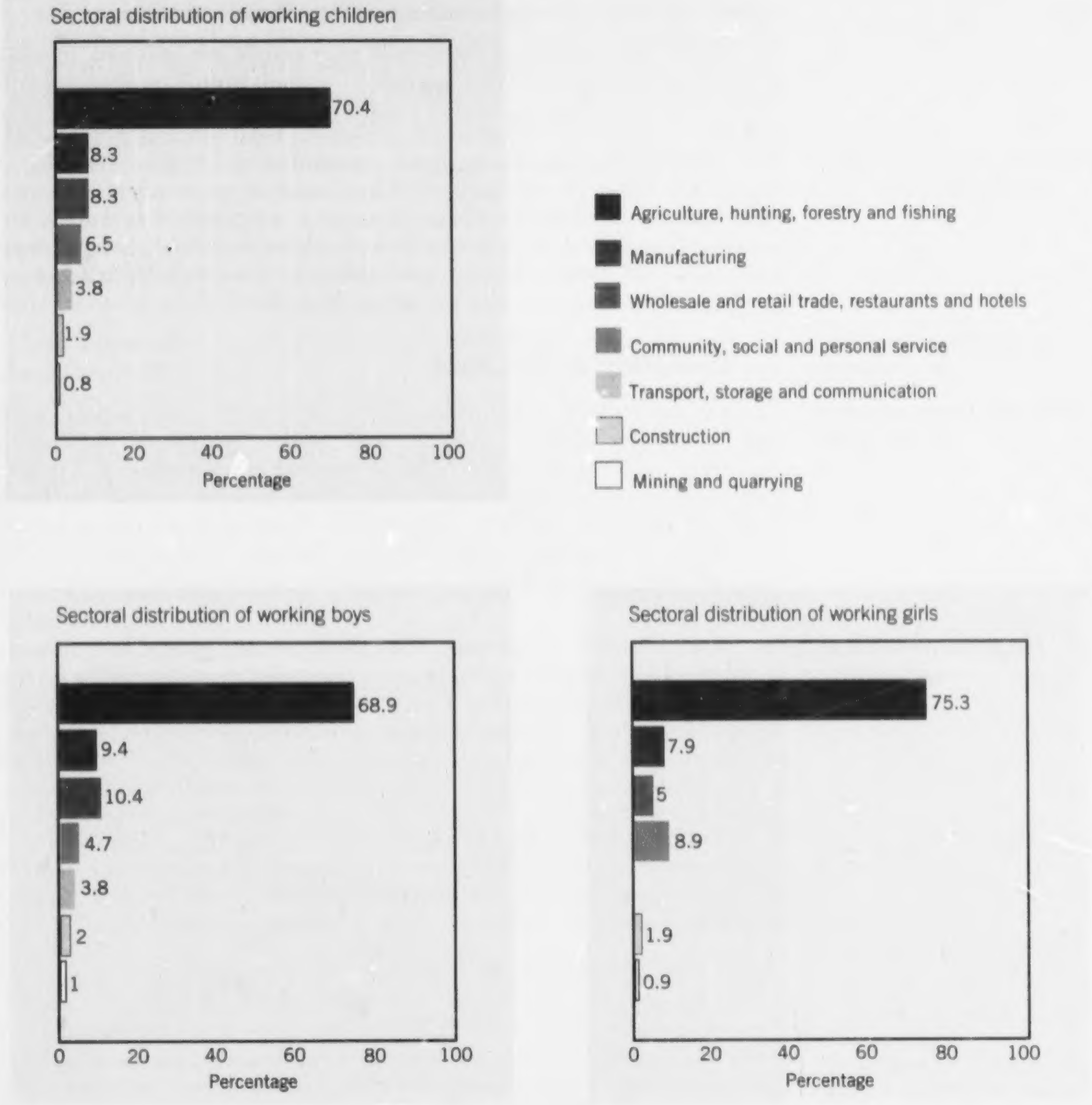
72. The informal economy is a burgeoning field of economic activity to be found throughout the developing world as well as in transition and in some developed countries. It encompasses "the expanding and increasingly diverse group of workers and enterprises in both rural and urban areas operating informally … they share one important characteristic: they are not recognized or protected under the legal and regulatory frameworks … Informal workers and entrepreneurs are characterized by a high degree of vulnerability".[35] The informal economy is where by far the most child labourers are found. It cuts across all economic sectors and may be closely linked to formal sector production. In agriculture, for instance, highly organized commercial plantations

---

[34] K. Ashagrie: *Statistics on working children, op. cit.*

[35] ILO: *Decent work and the informal economy*, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 90th Session, Geneva, 2002, Ch. 1.

Figure 4. Sectoral distribution of working children



Source: K. Ashagrie: ***Statistics on working children and hazardous child labour in brief*** (Geneva, ILO, 1997).

may contract out some production to small-scale family farms. In manufacturing, the factory of a multinational or a national enterprise may use parts or materials sourced from small workshops or through contractors from families working at home.

73. Most small and micro-enterprises are characterized by an informal work setting, unsafe conditions, cheap (and sometimes unpaid) labour, including that of children, and relatively low productivity and returns on investment. Where activities such as mining, fishing, and home-based production and as-

sembly work are unregulated, untaxed and do not involve recognized employment relationships, children can be considered as working in the informal economy. The preponderance of child labour in the informal economy beyond the reach of most formal institutions in countries at all levels of income,[36] represents one of the principal challenges to its effective abolition.

74. Many other aspects of the lives of poor people are informal, in addition to their economic activity, thus compounding their overall poverty and vulnerability. They may have no land or property rights, be unregistered as citizens and have no access to formal social protection, legal recourse or financial and other services. Households headed by women or children are the most insecure of all. Although informal safety nets exist, they are often far from adequate, and they are less reliable in urban areas compared to rural areas. Urban households tend to share fewer assets with others, making them more dependent on jobs for income.[37] In such conditions, the risks of children being pulled into income-earning activities are all too obvious.

Child labour in agriculture

Different types of work by children

75. The agriculture sector contains "the bulk of the world's poor, working long hours for meagre returns and under hazardous and difficult conditions".[38] Exercise of the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining is denied many adult agricultural workers around the world.[39] Work performed by children varies widely – from short periods of light work after school to long hours of arduous work that may involve dangerous chemicals and work processes, both in subsistence-oriented and commercial production.

Hazardous work in agriculture

76. While children's involvement in agriculture may indeed be a normal and useful part of their socialization in many countries, imparting skills for the future, the reality of such work is often harsh. Evidence from **India** suggests that the combination of poor nutrition and agricultural work in childhood results in stunting, which then impairs earning ability later in life.[40] In the **Philippines**, family-based vegetable farming has been shown to be a hazardous occupation for children, by virtue of exposure to infection from soil and water, the use of heavy watering cans and the lack of protective clothing.[41] Processing of agricultural products can also pose hazards. Peeling, cutting and grading cashew nuts, for example, exposes children to cuts, skin irritation and fatigue, and pain from sitting or standing for long periods.

---

[36] The Government of Belgium, for example, in its annual report under the follow-up to the Declaration for 2002, indicates that it "could reasonably estimate that child labour has disappeared from the legal economic network. It is only in the 'shadow' economy, which operates clandestinely and outside the scope of the law, that there is the risk of child labour", including in the food industry, the hotel-restaurant-café complex, sewing, activities linked to the sectors of prostitution and, to a lesser extent, agriculture and horticulture (p. 282).

[37] S.F. Rashid: "The urban poor in Dhaka City: Their struggles and coping strategies during the floods of 1998", in *Disasters* (Oxford, Blackwells, 2000), Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 240-253.

[38] ILO: *Note on the Proceedings*, Tripartite Meeting on Moving to Sustainable Agricultural Development through the Modernization of Agriculture and Employment in a Globalized Economy (Geneva, 2000), p. 3.

[39] ILO: *Your voice at work*, Report of the Director-General, International Labour Conference, 88th Session, Geneva, 2000.

[40] K. Satyanarayana, T. Prasanna Krishna and B.S. Narasinga Rao: "Effect of early childhood undernutrition and child labour on growth and adult nutritional status of rural Indian boys around Hyderabad", in *Human Nutrition: Clinical Nutrition*, 1986, No. 40C, pp. 131-139.

[41] IPEC: *Defining hazardous undertakings for young workers below 18 years of age: A country report* (Manila, ILO, 1997).

Gender and age differences

77. Gender roles are important in determining what work children do in agriculture. Both girls and boys generally contribute to the work of adult women, yet may be assigned different tasks requiring different levels of effort. In rural **Bangladesh**, girls begin work at a younger age and, because of their domestic tasks, work longer hours than boys. The number of boys and girls in a family and their birth order is also a factor. Among the rural Tonga of **Zimbabwe**, for instance, both boys and girls help women with household tasks. Many agricultural tasks are classed as women's work but, if women do not have daughters, they can rely on their sons, until the latter turn 10, for help in the fields.[42]

Debt bondage: a worst form of child labour

78. Children's work in agriculture too often goes hand in hand with debt bondage, one of the worst forms of child labour. The very poorest families, without land or with too little of it to meet subsistence needs, can quickly become entrapped by debt to their landlord or to a third party. Parents or guardians may have little choice but to bond their children into agricultural or domestic labour to repay the debt.[43]

Children working on plantations

79. Child labour often assumes serious proportions in commercial agriculture, associated with global markets for cocoa, coffee, cotton, rubber, sisal and tea, and other commodities. Children may represent a substantial portion of the commercial agricultural workforce. Studies in **Brazil**, **Kenya** and **Mexico** have shown that children under 15 make up between 25 and 30 per cent of the total labour force in production of various commodities.[44] Recently, the spotlight has turned to child (and forced) labour in cocoa production in West Africa (see Part II, Chapter 4). In Central America, too, large numbers of children work on plantations. Rapid Assessments (RA) carried out by IPEC have shown striking similarities among children who undertake agricultural work on plantations:

Box 2.2

The hazards of herding sheep

"We take 500 sheep to a distance of 10-15 kilometres for rearing. We walk a long distance and work in the sun. It is difficult to bear scorching heat. We carry drinking water from home. We may not find fodder for the sheep in the field. We have to climb trees and cut the leaves for the sheep. We are prone to health problems like headaches and burning eyes, hands and legs. It causes heatstroke. We have to stop the sheep from straying. It is dangerous for both us and the sheep if a jackal attacks.

Sometimes we have to spend the night with the sheep in the field. We don't get food or sleep if we stay there overnight. We have to make temporary shelters, which we have to shift every day. If there is an emergency we don't have any support. We cannot play or rest. If it rains we have to take the sheep home. Generally when it doesn't rain we take the sheep out for three days at a time. Girls face a lot of problems while herding sheep. Boys cause problems in the fields for the girls."

Source: Statement by Uttungamma, spokesperson for 823 working children from six villages, Karnataka, India, 2001.

---

[42] P. Reynolds: *Dance civet cat: Child labour in the Zambezi Valley* (London, Zed Books, 1991), pp. 61, 122-124.

[43] ILO: *Stopping forced labour*, op. cit.

[44] ILO: *Sustainable agricultural in a globalized economy*, Report for discussion at the Tripartite Meeting on Moving to Sustainable Agricultural Development through the Modernization of Agriculture and Employment in a Globalized Economy, ILO Sectoral Activities Programme (Geneva, 2000); and IPEC: *Child labour in commercial agriculture in Africa*, Technical Workshop on Child Labour in Commercial Agriculture in Africa, Dar es Salaam, the United Republic of Tanzania, 27-30 Aug. 1996 (Geneva, ILO, 1997), pp. 6 and 8.

- parents have low levels of educational attainment;
- most children attend school, but work at weekends or during school vacations;
- children's wages are included in those of the working parent(s); and
- children do not like the work but are resigned to helping out with household expenses and/or school fees.[45]

Transition and developed countries also affected

80. The discussion so far has focused on developing countries. Children's involvement in agriculture has also increased dramatically in certain transition countries with the break-up of collective farms into private, family-held smallholdings – increasing the need for the unpaid labour inputs of household members. In the **Russian Federation**, however, there are indications that children now work less in agriculture than they did during the Soviet period, as the forced involvement of children in crop-harvesting on collective farms, organized through schools, has been curtailed.[46]

Family farms: a common exemption from legislation

81. In many developed countries agriculture is also the sector in which most children work. Family farms are a common exemption from minimum age legislation.[47] In the **United States**, "children of any age may be employed by their parents or persons standing in place of their parents at any time and in any occupation on a farm owned or operated by their parents or persons standing in place of their parents",[48] with the implication that these children may engage in activities that they would not be allowed to undertake in other circumstances. Seven per cent of all farm workers (approximately 126,000) are between the ages of 14 and 17. However, the risk of accident and injury in modern agricultural production is high. In the United States, this sector has the highest number of occupational fatalities for youths under 18, accounting for 42.7 per cent of all fatalities in that age range.[49]

Child labour in fishing

82. Fishing is a particularly hazardous occupation, even for adults. In the small-scale sector, which accounts for over half the world's seafood catch and millions of small fishing craft, health and safety problems are endemic for all age groups.[50] The contribution of children is most widespread in small-scale fishing where it can be critical for the profitability of the enterprise. In **El Salvador**, children work in small-scale, family-based or private enterprises in which boys and girls harvest shellfish, and girls also market the product. For both sexes, this work begins well before the age of 10.[51]

---

[45] M. Pearson and R.T. Jensen: *Investigating the worst forms of child labour: Rapid Assessment synthesis report* (Geneva, ILO, 2001).

[46] S. Stephenson: "The abandoned children of Russia: From 'privileged class' to 'underclass'", in S. Webber and I. Liikanen (eds.): *Beyond civil society: Education and civic culture in post-communist countries* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001).

[47] Convention No. 138 specifies that "the provisions ... shall be applicable as a minimum to the following: ... and plantations and other agricultural undertakings mainly producing for commercial purposes, but excluding family and small-scale holdings producing for local consumption and not regularly employing hired workers" (Article 5(3)).

[48] ILO: Report of the United States on the effective abolition of child labour, *Review of annual reports under the Declaration, Part II* (Geneva, 2000).

[49] United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: *Report on the youth labor force* (June 2000, revised Nov. 2000).

[50] ILO: *Note on the Proceedings*, Tripartite Meeting on Safety and Health in the Fishing Industry (Geneva, ILO, 2000), p. 3; and ILO: *Safety and health in the fishing industry* (Geneva, ILO, 1999), p. 12.

[51] IPEC: *Project document: Supporting the Time-Bound Programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in El Salvador* (Geneva, ILO, 2001).

83. Some child labour in fishing occurs outside the family or traditional sector. For example, muro-ami fishing (named after the net used) in the **Philippines** takes place on large vessels, and the profits are reaped by the group that monopolizes the business. Children are engaged as swimmers and divers for catching reef fish – extremely dangerous work. In southern **Thailand**, children work as fish sorters, factory workers and as crew on fishing boats. They carry out a wide range of tasks on board, and may be away at sea for several months at a time. In central **Java**, work undertaken by children in fishing includes handling and repairing nets, diving, draining boats and cooking.[52]

Clear gender roles

84. As in agriculture, gender issues are important in fishing. A strong connection in general between fishing and cultural perceptions of masculinity, as well as income that looks high to boys, encourages them to go to sea as early as they can. As a good deal of fishing takes place at night, these boys make poor daytime pupils, and high school drop-out rates are a feature of fishing communities. Girls and women are engaged in marketing as well as fish processing, which can cause cuts and skin damage.

Child labour in the urban informal economy: Street children

Diversity of work on the streets

85. Although the informal economy is sometimes described as invisible, children working on the streets of cities across the world are probably the most visible face of child labour. Their activities are diverse – vending food and small consumer goods, shining shoes, washing windscreens, repairing tyres, scavenging and ragpicking, begging, portering, and numerous others. They face hazards both from the work itself and more importantly from the environment, such as traffic, exhaust fumes, exposure to the elements, insecurity, harassment and violence. Work in the urban informal economy also includes work in small businesses and workshops providing carpentry, car repair, food preparation or other services to urban dwellers. Children may be part of family or other informal enterprises and networks, or they may be self-employed. Actual street work is often associated with socially excluded (especially ethnic) groups.

86. Increased numbers of street children can be a reflection of upheavals and crises. A 24-country study by the Council of Europe found a higher number of street children in all European countries after the collapse of the communist system. Children and youth migrated to the West searching for work in the face of sudden poverty and loss of state social protection at home.[53] A similar story applies in Jakarta, **Indonesia**, in the wake of the Asian crisis, and indeed in many other countries affected by crisis.[54]

87. Street work has gender dimensions too, tending to involve more boys than girls, although more girls are involved in prostitution. Surveys of children working on the street in Moscow and St. Petersburg, **Russian Federation**, found that about 75 per cent are boys and 25 per cent girls.[55] In most developing countries, the proportion of boys among street children is even higher.

---

[52] ILO: *Safety and health in the fishing industry*, op. cit.

[53] Council of Europe, Steering Committee on Social Policy, Study group on street children: *Street children: Coordinated research programme in the social field (1992-93)*, Definitive Report (Strasbourg, Council of Europe Press, 1994).

[54] C. Manning: *The economic crisis and child labour in Indonesia*, IPEC Working Paper (Geneva, ILO, 2000).

[55] S. Stephenson: "'The abandoned children of Russia: From 'privileged class' to 'underclass'", op. cit.

Child labour in manufacturing: From factories to home-based work

Children in supply chains

88. While far from being the sector employing the greatest number of children, manufacturing for export has had the highest profile in relation to child labour, for example, in carpet-weaving, soccer-ball stitching and clothing production. Typically, however, children are involved at the end of supply chains producing largely for the domestic market, in home-based, informal work to assemble parts or finish products in a wide range of industries. These range from textiles, clothing and footwear, to production of fireworks and matches in many countries around the world. The explosion that killed children who were making fireworks during their school lunch hour in **China** in 2000 showed just how dangerous such work can be. Some production processes, such as leather tanning and brassware production, are particularly hazardous because of the toxic products used. In glassmaking, children risk burns and cuts and are exposed to hazardous dust and lead. Incense stick production in **India** and **Pakistan** causes upper respiratory tract problems.[56] Because this work is mostly carried out by girls, it is they who are especially at risk. Often the conditions under which production occurs make the work even more dangerous because of the lack of proper engineering, work organization and protective equipment. Low profit margins do not encourage investment in improvements.

89.Home-based work involving subcontracting appears to be increasing in many countries. A comparative study in Asia (covering **India**, **Indonesia**, **Pakistan**, the **Philippines** and **Thailand**) found that production had shifted from factories to homes for products ranging from carpets to leather goods to hybrid seeds. This reduced labour costs for employers, with the work being carried out by women and children, especially girls. In some cases, older children were working between 20 and 30 hours a week, and reported suffering back and muscle pain from the cramped working conditions.[57]

Workshops in developed countries

90. Developed countries can also have child labour in manufacturing. **Portugal**, having encountered significant numbers of children in the textile, clothing and footwear industries, has placed control of the problem high on the Government's agenda.[58] In southern **Italy**, children are reported to work in small industrial/manufacturing workshops in unsafe conditions, for well below the equivalent adult wage.[59] Of **Spain**'s estimated 200,000 under-14-year-old workers, many work in small subcontracting businesses, in particular in the footwear industry.[60]

Child labour in tourism

91. In the hotel, catering and tourism industry, children carry out a variety of jobs, from bell-boys and maids to dishwashers, beach attendants, hawkers and golf caddies; worldwide in this industry, 10-15 per cent of workers (between 13 and 19 million) are under 18 years of age.[61]

---

[56] S. Mehrotra and M. Biggeri: *The subterranean child labour force: A comparative analysis of subcontracted home-based manufacturing in five Asian countries*, Innocenti Working Paper (Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, forthcoming 2002).

[57] ibid.

[58] PEETI (Plan on the Elimination of Child Labour Exploitation): *Guide of legislation and resources on child labour* (Lisbon, Ministry of Labour and Solidarity, 2000); and PEETI: *Child labour in Portugal: Social characterization of school age children and their families* (Lisbon, Ministry of Labour and Solidarity, 2001).

[59] R. Lorenzo: *Italy: Too little time and space for childhood* (Florence, UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1992).

[60] Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee: *Combating child labour exploitation as a matter of priority* (Doc. 7840), 5 June 1997.

[61] ILO: *Human resources development, employment and globalization in the hotel, catering and tourism sector* (Geneva, 2001), pp. 74-76.

The dark side of tourism

92. While much of the work of young people in the sector is legitimate, there are indications of considerable abuse. Low pay is the normal experience of young employees in hotels and catering. Many children work in the informal economy which surrounds and supports the formal tourist industry. Active recruitment and trafficking agents may pull children to work in the sector, although poverty and the lure of consumerism are key push factors. Children's work in tourism may have a spillover effect into prostitution – exposing children to the risk of sexual exploitation because of the element of "personal service" involved and the stark discrepancy in income between workers and clients.[62]

93. In Acapulco, **Mexico**, children aged 7-12, employed by beach restaurants to bring in customers, are paid exclusively by commission on the customers' drinks.[63] Studies of **India**'s Dhaba boys reveal that those working in small hotels receive such meagre daily wages that they have to take out loans from their employers. The terms of repayment and interest can lead to debt bondage.[64] In ***Kenya***, children's work related to tourism includes selling crafts, food and other items, entertainment, beach work and prostitution.[65] Most children are involved in a combination of jobs; many work at night when they can gain the most money from entertaining tourists. Children's wages are often very low, but their employers expect them to find their own ways to earn more money, such as through tips or by taking on more work. Economic exploitation leaves young workers in an extremely vulnerable situation, exposing them to other forms of exploitation, including commercial sex.

Children in domestic service

Child domestic workers – hidden from view

94. There are large numbers of children in domestic service but they are among the most invisible child labourers and are therefore difficult to survey and analyse. There are clear links between children in domestic service and trafficking, both within and between countries.[66] Child domestics are often ignored by policy-makers and excluded from the coverage of legislation; indeed, even adults in this sector are often hidden from view in private households and denied legislative protection, let alone guarantees of the right to organize. A number of countries have reported under the follow-up to the Declaration that their labour laws exclude domestic work in private households altogether. Child domestic work is a problem across the world, affecting rich as well as poor countries.

95. While most child domestic workers are between 12 and 17 years of age, some are as young as 5 or 6. The majority are girls, but boys are involved too; in Kathmandu, **Nepal**, more than half the child domestics are boys. Child domestics, often isolated and far from their families, are under the total control of their employer and are often deprived of emotional support, good nutrition and education, and work long hours for meagre payment in kind. They can be victims of physical, emotional and sometimes sexual abuse. In addition, the

---

[62] M. Black: *In the twilight zone: Child workers in the hotel, tourism and catering industry* (Geneva, ILO, 1995).

[63] ibid.

[64] ibid.

[65] ILO: *Child labour in tourism on the Kenyan coast*, Project INT/96/M06/NOR (Geneva).

[66] This is well documented in West Africa; see, for example, IPEC: *Combating trafficking in children for labour exploitation in West and Central Africa: Synthesis report based on studies of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo* (Geneva, ILO, 2001). Networks between rural and urban areas have also been described in Peru and the United Republic of Tanzania.

mantle of foster care or informal adoption can be thrown over a relationship that ends up being pure child exploitation.[67]

Paradoxical situations

96. Paradoxes abound. Young girls from poverty-stricken rural families may be taking care of older, less capable children in richer urban households. In other cases, there may not be a great wealth difference between employer and employee; even urban slum-dwelling families may have a young female servant, perhaps a distant relative from the countryside. The domestic, unpaid labour of young girls may enable adult women to take up new opportunities in the paid labour market.

97. The problem is a sizeable one. The Government of **Haiti** reports that some 250,000 children of disadvantaged parents are in domestic service (known as "restavek", or "stay with").[68] A substantial proportion of the child population of a country can be involved. In **Brazil, Colombia** and **Ecuador,** 20 per cent of all girls between the ages of 10 and 14 are engaged as domestics, and in rural areas the percentages are even higher.[69] Official statistics normally capture, if at all, only child domestics who are working in the homes of other people.[70] Yet, where school-age children are systematically kept at home by parents or other adults to undertake long hours of domestic work instead of going to school, this too can amount to unacceptable child labour.

Child labour in construction, mining and quarrying

98. These sectors pose the most obvious hazards for children, although they probably involve the smallest number of child labourers. Children of construction workers, particularly when they live on-site, are at risk of child labour in several ways. They may not be in any one place for long enough to attend school regularly, they may take up casual work with parents as an alternative to idleness or play, and they may, by virtue of their location, be exposed to the hazards of construction.

99. In developed countries, work in construction poses hazards to young workers. In **New Zealand**, one study revealed that construction has the second-highest injury rate for adolescents, at more than one per four full-time equivalent workers.[71] In **Italy,** a recent survey by the labour federation, Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL), estimated that, of the 400,000 children aged 11-14 at work, 10 per cent were in construction.[72]

Multiple hazards in construction

100.In different countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia, children work alongside their parents, or independently, in underground mines, opencast mines and quarries. They also carry out support functions such as collecting, sorting and transporting aggregate, or cooking and cleaning in remote mining enclaves.[73] The hazards of such work are multiple: from cave-ins to long-term damage from carrying heavy loads and exposure to dust or chemicals, and they vary according to the substance mined and the way the work is organized.

---

[67] S.W.E. Goonesekere: *Children in domestic service in Sri Lanka* (Geneva, ILO, 1993).

[68] ILO: *Review of annual reports under the Declaration. Part II* (Geneva, 2001), p. 289.

[69] ILO: *Targeting the intolerable: A new international Convention to eliminate the worst forms of child labour*, fact sheet on domestic service (Geneva, ILO, 1999).

[70] Household surveys may not even pick up non-family domestic workers, as they do not necessarily distinguish between children *of* the household and children *in* the household. Household heads may also simply not report domestic workers in surveys.

[71] V. Dufort et al.: "Occupational injuries among adolescents in Dunedin, New Zealand, 1990-1993", in *Annals of Emergency Medicine* (St. Louis, Missouri), Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 266-73.

[72] P. Dorman: *Child labour in the developed economies*, IPEC Working Paper (Geneva, ILO, 2001), p. 27.

[73] ILO: *Social and labour issues in small-scale mines* (Geneva, 1999).

Box 2.3

Child labour in small-scale mining in Colombia

Studies of child labour in the extraction of gold, emeralds, coal and clay in Colombia provide considerable insight into children's time use, the income received (and by whom), the problems and risks encountered, children's perceptions of work and school and the situation of mining families and communities.

Both boys and girls are at risk of becoming involved in small-scale mining at a very early age (as young as 5 years, with participation increasing after age 7). Girls bear an additional heavy burden of domestic chores, and their schooling suffers as a result. In spite of the hours worked (ranging from 14 to 27 hours per week), 60 per cent of the children are not paid. Thus, perceptions of children's contribution to the family income are illusory. Although children are exposed to extreme temperatures, strong odours, dust, and insect and animal bites, they nonetheless express a degree of satisfaction with their work.

Source: ILO and MINERCOL: *The boys and girls who work in Colombia's small-scale mining: Socio-cultural, economic and legislative diagnosis* (ILO and MINERCOL, Lima, 2001).

Children as young as 6 or 7 years old are breaking up rocks, and washing, sieving and carrying ore. Nine-year-olds work underground setting explosives and carrying loads. An IPEC survey in **Madagascar** found that 53 per cent of the children in small-scale mines and quarries were aged 12 or younger. In **Guatemala** and the **United Republic of Tanzania,** as in other countries, children work alongside their parents crushing rock to make gravel for the construction industry. And while the children may work just as hard as the adults, they are paid much less, if at all. Mining sometimes involves debt bondage (as with gold in **Peru**), and it may coincide with the bankrolling of armed conflict (as with diamond mining in **Sierra Leone**). While much of the mining that involves child labour is small scale, the hazards it poses are not. In a closely related field of production, children are directly employed in brick-making in many countries, often in connection with bonded labour (as in South Asia) or family production quotas (as in some countries in Latin America).

The unconditional worst forms of child labour

Evidence is incomplete

101. Thus far, we have considered child labour in legitimate economic sectors, where national law determines whether or not a particular activity is permissible for children of different ages. The unconditional worst forms of child labour are those which, under any circumstances, are in contravention of international law. While increased research is certainly leading to a better understanding of these forms of child labour, we still face a huge problem of data availability and quality. The evidence is patchy and incomplete, and thus the dynamic global picture remains partial – a sketch rather than a sharp image. The next Global Report on child labour four years from now will provide an opportunity to see how much the gaps in our current understanding have been filled.

Forms of child slavery such as sale and trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom and forced or compulsory labour

Labour practices produce worst forms of child labour

102. The various forms of child slavery that are outlawed under Convention No. 182 (and other international instruments) can occur across different economic sectors and types of activity. For example, we have seen already how debt bondage occurs in agriculture and in brick-making, and how children are

trafficked into domestic service. The labour practice under which an otherwise harmless economic activity occurs may transform this activity into a worst form of child labour. It is thus important to understand that the worst forms of child labour can come about as a result of the type of work undertaken or the labour practice used to exact the child's work, or a combination of the type of work and the labour practice.

Paying the debts of adults

103. Debt bondage, regardless of whether parents have contracted a debt that is to be paid off by their own labour or by pledging the services of their children, places children ultimately at the mercy of the landowner, contractor or money-lender, where they suffer from both economic hardship and educational deprivation. The main difference between adult and child bonded labour is that children have not themselves contracted the debt – it was done on their behalf by adults. The link between child labour and the inter-generational perpetuation of poverty could hardly be clearer. Bonded child labour flourishes in different parts of the globe; not only in South Asia with which it is most commonly linked, but also in Latin America, Africa and South-East Asia.

104. Debt bondage is increasingly linked with trafficking of children for labour exploitation. Rural poverty, coupled with population growth and rapid urbanization, leads some parents to place their children with agents, not only in exchange for money but also in the hope that the child will receive education or training at the point of destination. In other cases, children themselves make the decision to leave their home (see box 2.4). The child victims, who may end up in commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work or sweatshops, may never know the amount of the debt they are working to pay off or the terms of repayment.

The gender factor

105. The subjection of children to forced labour through trafficking has age and gender dimensions: the younger the child, the less likely he or she is to be able to escape a forced labour situation. Boys and girls may be forced into different types of activity, for instance, girls predominate in commercial sexual exploitation and domestic work, and boys in forced recruitment for armed conflict and for camel jockeying in the Middle East, although there is considerable overlap.

106. The routes and mechanisms for trafficking are increasingly well understood,[74] but the numbers of children involved remain vague. It is thought that child trafficking has become a billion-dollar-a-year business, with an estimated 1.2 million children falling victim annually. It is a truly global problem connecting all countries and regions of the world in a complex network of illicit movements of human beings. Sources, destinations and routes for trafficking are constantly evolving in the face of global changes in supply, demand and the regulatory environment. In West and Central Africa, most trafficking is family-based, related to traditional systems of fostering that have now become exploitative.

Trafficking: a global phenomenon

107. Trafficking of young children for exploitation in agriculture and domestic service has only relatively recently been recognized as a problem in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, while in South-East Asia, trafficking for prostitution is a long-standing source of concern. Countries in Western Europe and North America now openly acknowledge that they are destinations for trafficked men, women and children from around the world and for a variety of purposes. Transition countries are witnessing a huge upsurge in the problem. The **Republic of Moldova**, **Romania** and **Ukraine** are major source coun-

---

[74] See, for example, P. Boonpala and J. Kane: *Trafficking of children: The problem and responses worldwide* (Geneva, ILO, 2001).

Box 2.4

Recruitment procedures in trafficking

The spectrum of methods for recruitment by traffickers runs a wide gamut from drugging and abduction to persuasion.

Evidence from the Mekong subregion confirms that not all trafficked children enter the process against their will. A growing number of girls, especially in Myanmar and Yunnan, China, are simply persuaded into a job, and are aware of the trafficking process but not of the levels of indebtedness they will experience. Many of these girls socialize with prostitutes and, through peer pressure and familiarity with the environment, become prostitutes "voluntarily". The more experienced children are, the more independently they migrate. The first time, children can be trafficked under coercion but, with limited alternatives, they may opt to remain in the situations into which they are trafficked.

In this region, trafficking takes place in a well-organized and profitable network. The actors involved include facilitators, agents or sub-agents, trip managers, police authorities, parents and other relatives, guards, and job-placement agencies, each with a specific role and profit. Different procedures and routes apply to different jobs, each with its own network.

International law makes it clear that, for children under 18 years of age, any "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation" shall be considered as trafficking, even if it does not involve "the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power ..." and other forms mentioned in Article 3(a) for trafficked persons aged 18 years and older).[1]

[1] United Nations: Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), Article 3.

Sources: H. van de Glind and C. Coenjaerts: *Combating trafficking in children for labour exploitation in the Mekong subregion: A proposed framework for ILO-IPEC action and proceedings of a Mekong subregional consultation* (Bangkok, ILO, 1998).

tries for trafficked girls and women. Girls from Eastern Europe are first brought to **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Kosovo or **Albania** where they are sold to local gangs to be trafficked to Western Europe for prostitution.[75] Other transition countries, such as **Kyrgyzstan** and **Mongolia**, have also become targets of sophisticated international trafficking rings that channel girls through the **Russian Federation** to Western Europe and through **China** to **Japan** and **Australia.**[76]

Forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict

Children in armed conflict

108. The experiences of children forced to participate in armed conflict, particularly in **Africa**, led the International Labour Conference to include this practice as one of the worst forms of child labour. Although "child soldiers"[77]

---

[75] IOM: *Trafficking in unaccompanied minors for sexual exploitation in the European Union* (Brussels, IOM, 2001); and IOM: *Victims of trafficking in the Balkans: A study of trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation to, through and from the Balkan region* (Slovak Republic, IOM, 2001).

[76] IPEC: *Country report Mongolia: Trafficking related issues* (Ulaanbaatar, ILO, 2001); and IOM: *Trafficking in women and children from the Kyrgyz Republic* (Bishkek, IOM, 2000).

[77] The popular term "child soldier" extends as well to support personnel, broadly defined. There is a link between the increased use of small arms in modern conflict and the increased use of child soldiers. Because modern guns are light and portable, children become more attractive as both supply carriers and fighters.

comprise only a small proportion of the child population of any country in conflict, the trauma they endure is extreme. As a government loses effective control over parts of its territory (e.g. as in **Colombia)**, its scope of action against children's involvement in armed conflict diminishes.

109. The number of children under the age of 18 who have been coerced or induced, either by the State or by non-state military groups, to take up arms as child soldiers or to serve as porters, messengers, cooks and sex slaves is generally thought to be in the range of 300,000,[78] with 120,000 of those in Africa alone.[79] These children are reported to be as young as 8 years old.[80] The part played by girls in armed conflict is important and often misunderstood. Although often portrayed only in the context of forced provision of sexual services to adult soldiers, girls have multiple roles, including that of frontline fighters.[81]

Vulnerable groups of children

110. Children recruited as soldiers in times of armed conflict and as child labourers in peacetime originate from the same groups:

- children separated from their families or with disrupted family backgrounds (e.g. orphans, unaccompanied children, single-parent families, child-headed households);
- economically and socially disadvantaged children (e.g. the rural and urban poor, those without access to education, vocational training and a reasonable standard of living); and
- other marginalized groups (e.g. street children, certain minorities, refugees and the internally displaced).

111. Examples of forced recruitment of children and adolescents abound: in the northern part of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** in 1996, children aged 16-18 were caught up in forced labour brigades digging trenches, moving supplies, evacuating dead and wounded combatants, acting as human shields, harvesting crops, cutting firewood and working in factories without pay. It is notable that most were from socially excluded groups among the Muslim. Croat and Roma communities.[82]

112. Low-intensity, long-term conflict means that children are more likely to become combatants as educational opportunities and infrastructure are progressively destroyed. Changing labour markets may also play a role. In **Sierra Leone**, for example, during the 1980s, the diamond-mining industry reverted to small-scale, local entrepreneurs, who kept profits high by paying young people low wages. Educational investment in mining areas was also low. It was therefore easy for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to target disaffected youth for recruitment. Some were forcibly abducted to work as soldiers but others joined because of incentives such as informal education, better wages

---

[78] United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 1261 (1999) on children and armed conflict, United Nations General Assembly, 55th Session, New York, 2000.

[79] The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers: *Africa Report*, see www.child-soldiers.org/reports_africa/executive_summary.html

[80] The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers: *Americas Report*, see www.child-soldiers.org/reports latamr/executive_summary.html

[81] S. McKay and D. Mazurana: *Girls in militaries, paramilitaries and armed opposition groups*, Paper presented at the International Conference on War-Affected Children, Winnipeg, Canada, Sep. 2000. According to this research, girls play multiple roles in armed groups: fighters, 41 per cent; suicide missions, 10 per cent; porters, 25 per cent; cooks, 13 per cent; camp followers, 18 per cent; spies, 1 per cent; looters, 21 per cent; and sexual services, 28 per cent.

[82] United Nations: *Situation in the region of Banja Luka, northern Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Periodic report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights (doc. E/CN.4/1996/3, 1995).

and access to drugs.[83] Not all children are physically coerced into becoming combatants; soldiering may tragically appear to be the best economic option available for marginalized, vulnerable groups of children. In addition, children, particularly adolescents, may be lured into armed conflict by the ideology associated with it, be it religious expression, the struggle for self-determination or other social causes.[84]

Commercial sexual exploitation of children

Unequal power relations lead to sexual exploitation

113. This worst form of child labour illustrates, in the most dramatic way possible, how the powerlessness of children renders them vulnerable to exploitation by adults. For many children, being drugged, abducted, abused and/or sold by their parents or other relatives can lead them down the path to exploitation through prostitution, production of pornography and pornographic performances.[85] However, it is not always so easy to draw the line between children involved in commercial sexual exploitation and those who, because of their situation, are prone to sexual exploitation and abuse by adults. Children may be persuaded or threatened into having sex with adults who have power over them. Sexual abuse of children by male teachers in the closed school environment has been widely reported in sub-Saharan Africa.[86] The terrible consequences of sexual exploitation for children, both emotional and physical (as a result of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection, unwanted pregnancy and abortion, physical violence and abuse by clients) are liable to lead to loss of self-esteem, mental and physical illness, infertility, behavioural problems, substance abuse and death.

Evidence from the follow-up to the Declaration

114. Prostitution and the sale and trafficking of children, particularly of girls, was the worst form of child labour most often cited as "known or suspected to exist" in reports submitted under the 2002 follow-up to the Declaration by countries at all levels of development. While estimates of the numbers involved go into the hundreds of thousands in some countries, the true extent of the problem is unknown. Where data do exist, they are often not disaggregated by sex or age.

115. Socio-cultural factors driving children's, often girls', involvement in commercial sexual exploitation include lack of education and economic opportunity, the relatively high earnings perceived to be on offer, a cultural obligation for children to support their parents by earning money in whatever way they can and disintegration of the family.[87] As in many other transition countries, prostitution of children in the **Russian Federation** (12-15 per cent of prostitutes in Moscow are estimated to be under 18, with higher percentages in smaller cities) is often related to internal or external migration. In

---

[83] P. Richards: *Fighting for the rain forest: War, youth and resources in Sierra Leone* (Oxford, James Currey, 1996), pp. 28-29, 48-52.

[84] United Nations: *Promotion and protection of the rights of children: Impact of armed conflict on children*, Study prepared by Graça Machel (doc. A/51/306, 1996).

[85] United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: *Sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth in the Greater Mekong subregion: A qualitative assessment of their health needs and available services* (New York, United Nations, 2000).

[86] See F. Leach, P. Machakanga and J. Mandoga: *Preliminary investigation of the abuse of girls in Zimbabwean Junior Secondary Schools* (Harare, United Kingdom Department for International Development Research Paper No. 39, 2000), cited in R. Baker: *The sexual exploitation of working children: Guidelines for action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour* (London, DFID Social Development Department, 2001), p. 17.

[87] H. Berger and H. van der Glind: *Children in prostitution, pornography and illicit activities, Thailand: Magnitude of problems and remedies*, Discussion Paper, Asian Regional Meeting on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, Phuket, Thailand, 1999 (Bangkok, ILO, 1999).

a number of developed countries, a high representation of children of indigenous groups or of foreigners in such activities has been noted (e.g. **Canada**, the **United States**).

Demand: the driving force

116. Demand, of course, also plays an important part in determining the shape of the problem as it affects children. The presence of military troops or of large public works projects may act as pull factors. Tourist centres create high demand for prostitution. Client preferences for young children, particularly in the context of HIV/AIDS, inevitably get translated into an increased supply. Clients in the sex tourism trade are both male and female, as are the children they exploit. For example, beach boys in **Gambia** and in **Jamaica** cater to the female tourist trade.

117. Commercial sexual exploitation of boys is reported to be increasing. A recent IPEC Rapid Assessment in **El Salvador** found that one-third of the sexually exploited children aged between 14 and 17 were boys. Although in most countries, boys represent 10-20 per cent of the children involved, there are some countries, such as **Pakistan** and **Sri Lanka**, where boys are in the majority. While both boys and girls may experience sexual exploitation differently, and boys may be less subject to physical coercion, neither experience is any less intolerable than the other.

Children in illicit activities

118. There is very little information available about children's involvement in illicit activities, such as producing and trafficking drugs. Countries facing serious problems with the drugs trade, from **Colombia** to **Cambodia** and the **United States** to the **Russian Federation**, know all too well that children, including very young children, can be swept up in such activity. There is also a spillover between drug availability and street children. In a study of street children in St. Petersburg, **Russian Federation**, 6 per cent said they worked because they needed money to buy drugs.[88]

---

[88] IPEC: *In-depth analysis of the situation of working street children in Saint Petersburg* (St. Petersburg, ILO, 2000).

3. Child labour and development shocks

119. No country or region is immune from child labour, and none is shielded from the impacts of the development shocks and crises that have reverberated around the world in recent years, and indeed continue to do so. Such shocks include sharp economic or financial downturns, political and economic transition, natural disasters, armed conflict and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Crises undermine development

120. Crises are often linked and countries can experience several of them simultaneously, compounding and deepening their impact (see box 3.1). A crisis may vary in its impact depending on its type and intensity, but all crises tend to worsen poverty, to increase the numbers of people in vulnerable situations, to weaken institutions, to drain government resources available for social expenditure and to have other serious negative economic, political, social

Box 3.1

An example of a complex crisis: Tajikistan

Upon independence, Tajikistan was the poorest and least economically developed of the republics of the former USSR but it had a 98-per-cent literacy rate. The shocks that have paved the way for current child labour problems include:

- 1992-97: armed conflict leaves countless dead and many more displaced, and costs the Government US$7 billion;
- 1993: flooding, with destruction of crops and property;
- 1995: diphtheria epidemic;
- 1990-95: national economy shrinks by almost 70 per cent.

The picture today, with 41 per cent of the population under 15 years of age includes:

- family survival strategies that involve child labour, begging, migration, selling belongings and engaging in criminal activity, among others;
- a sharply declining agricultural sector;
- a crisis in nutrition – 81 per cent of household expenditure is on food;
- schools that are unheated, locked or turned into transit camps and have no teachers as a result of low or unpaid salaries;
- since 1997 the need for remedial education for returning refugees;
- widening gender gaps.

Source: UNDP: *National Human Development Report: Tajikistan* (1999), Chapter 4.

and psychological impacts. Crises expose and exploit existing fault lines in society, and create new ones. The harshest blow inevitably falls on low-income and resource-poor groups. Most children probably comprehend little of the forces at work around them, and are unable to do much, if anything, to counter the profound effects of these on their lives. These forces can make the difference between whether a child is safe or in danger, sick or healthy, goes hungry or is fed, lives with his or her family, strangers or alone, and whether he or she works or goes to school or does both. Therefore, the existence and impact of crises are important features of the dynamic global picture of child labour today.

Economic and financial crises

121. The economic slowdown that was visible by mid-2001 and that deepened after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 on the United States will have significant social repercussions worldwide. Major workforce retrenchments in developed countries have already had ripple effects on suppliers and associated enterprises around the globe. World Bank predictions suggest economic slowdown in all regions, at least in the short term. Job losses and reduced investment will exacerbate poverty, which may in turn increase child labour, if effective policy responses are not put into place to mitigate the impact. Although the relationship between economic crisis and child labour is not fully understood, experience from the recent past provides some insights.

The impact of the East Asian crisis on children

122. The East Asian economic and financial crisis of 1997-98 illustrates the rapidity with which downturns can occur and the consequences they can have. Child welfare in the wake of the crisis appears to have declined primarily because of:

— decreased family income as formal sector employment diminished and adult workers took employment in the informal sector;

— declining real wages as the result of inflation, which had an impact on the price of food and health care;

— a decrease in government revenue, which reduced governments' capacity to maintain social expenditures.[89]

Responses at household level

123. Yet the impact of the crisis on children seems to have been less marked than might have been expected. In general, most children continued to attend school and to receive sufficient food and health care, largely because family resources were allocated to maintain an adequate level of support.[90] Survival mechanisms developed by the many families in the informal economy may well have cushioned the effects of the crisis. In contrast, for those in the formal sector, income dropped sharply or was lost altogether.

Public policy matters

124. There were also differences across the region. The economy in **Indonesia** was hit the hardest, but the aggregate impact on child labour was limited. The importance attributed to education, social perceptions of child labour and the effectiveness of government schemes to counter poverty may have played an important role in maintaining school enrolment levels.[91] The Government

---

[89] AusAID: *The impact of the Asia crisis on children: Issues for social safety nets*, a report sponsored by the Australian Government for APEC, 1999, p. 101. See also E. Lee: *The Asian financial crisis: The challenge for social policy* (Geneva, ILO, 1998).

[90] ILO/UNDP: Employment challenges of the Indonesian economic crisis (Jakarta, ILO, 1998).

[91] L.A. Cameron: *The impact of the Indonesian financial crisis on children: An analysis using the 100 villages data*, Innocenti Working Paper No. 81 (Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2000); and C. Manning: *The economic crisis and child labour in Indonesia*, op. cit.

abolished school fees and instituted several initiatives to help poor students deal with the hidden costs of education. In 1997-98, the labour force participation of children aged 10-14 increased only 0.6 per cent, and decreased 0.7 per cent in the 15-19 age group; school attendance rates reflected this pattern. The main impact was in fact on those children already working, apparently leading to a shift from wage labour to more hazardous informal work, and a fall in earnings or loss of work for children.[92] And while the impact of the crisis was blunted, the earlier downward trend in child labour has not been re-established in the post-crisis period.

125. By contrast, the **Philippines** was not hit as hard by the crisis, but child labour was definitely aggravated. School enrolment, especially at secondary level, declined. At the same time, youth unemployment soared. Both children and youth were thus more vulnerable to informal, illegal and hazardous economic activities.[93]

126. In **Thailand**, the crisis had a limited negative impact on overall school enrolment, but youth unemployment rose. However, in rural areas school drop-out rates increased, possibly indicating a shift into child labour. The drop-out rate among the poor was almost double that of the non-poor during the 1998-99 school year.[94]

Experience outside Asia

127. Greater proportional losses by the poor in times of economic crisis have occurred in other regions as well. In severe recessions in **Brazil** and **Chile**, for example, poor children tended to be pulled out of school. But effects are not uniform across countries or socio-economic groups. As in Asia, household coping strategies appear to be heavily influenced by government policy, especially as regards social welfare and education – pointing to the particular importance of social protection for the poor to buffer the impacts of crises. Such experiences offer useful policy pointers for countries now in economic crisis, such as **Argentina**.[95]

Countries in transition

Profound effects of transition

128. Economic and social shocks can also occur in the context of more gradual but radical transition. Both deep political change and economic restructuring have been features of many countries over the past two decades. While transition countries[96] have had mixed experiences, thus far it would seem that the losses for children as a result of the upheavals have far outweighed the gains. Chronic poverty is an emerging issue; the most vulnerable families have been those with children, especially single-parent families, and those from socially excluded groups. Transition has profound psychological impacts too: the dismantling of systems of state support, the loss of guaranteed employment for adults and a collapse in income and living standards have caused widespread feelings of shame, confusion and marginalization, leading to social problems such as substance abuse. In such conditions, many transition countries have seen the emergence of child labour on a previously unknown scale.

---

[92] C. Manning: *The economic crisis and child labour in Indonesia*, op. cit.

[93] J.Y. Lim: *The East Asian crisis and child labour in the Philippines*, IPEC Working Paper (Geneva, ILO, 2000).

[94] World Bank: *Thailand social monitor: Coping with the crisis in education and health* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 1999).

[95] D. de Ferranti et al. *Securing our future in a global economy* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2000), p. 85.

[96] The countries most usually described as being "in transition" are either changing from a centrally planned to a market-oriented economy, or from a politically restrictive to a more democratic regime; the two transitions are far from being mutually exclusive.

Child labour in centrally planned economies

129. Child labour was not just ideologically unacceptable, it had no real place in centrally planned economies that operated by controlling labour mobility and by strictly regulating the job market, as well as personal freedoms. Officially, children could perform work only if it prepared them for future employment within the framework of education.[97] To this day, **Cuba** states that child labour does not exist in that country.[98] Nonetheless, even in pre-reform socialist countries, child labour existed to some extent.[99]

New pressures on children

130. With the transformation to market economies, strong new pressures have emerged on children, especially among the poor, to contribute to family income or to provide for themselves. Countries of the former USSR and those in Central and Eastern Europe have all seen, to varying degrees, an increase in poverty, family disintegration, migration and population displacement, erosion of social safety nets, deterioration in health and education services and increases in delinquency and drug use among young people. At the same time, opportunities for children to participate in the largely unregulated labour market have rapidly multiplied, especially in the expanding informal (and often illegal) economy. The interplay of these factors has led to an upsurge in child labour in all its forms. With limited or no experience in dealing with child labour, government institutions are ill-equipped to devise effective responses.

131. **Mongolia** embarked on drastic economic reforms that led to a steep rise in poverty and reduced government provision for children. Exacerbated by the decimation of livestock by a severe winter and disease in 2000, rural-urban migration has increased, including many children who now work in the informal sector as peddlers or shining shoes.[100] Street children did not exist in any of the former socialist or pre-reform economies. Runaway children were quickly picked up by police and either returned to their families or placed in residential care. Now, as a result of poverty and migration, they can be found in urban areas in all transition countries, as elsewhere in the world. In various countries of Eastern Europe, Roma children are particularly disadvantaged. They are disproportionately involved in hazardous labour and at high risk of poor health, delinquency and poverty.

Transformation of rural economies

132. Children's involvement in agriculture has tended to increase in some transition countries. For example, in rural **Viet Nam**, the collapse of the collective sector combined with the introduction of a household contract system in agriculture has reinforced the need for the labour inputs of children on family farms. These may include children hired or transferred from other households, perhaps for payment only in kind. **China** has seen an increase in work by children on family farms, despite the enforcement of compulsory basic education laws.[101]

---

[97] V.N. Yagodkin: *How child labour was eradicated in the USSR: Integrating school and society, population and labour policies programme*, Working Paper No. 109 (Geneva, ILO, 1981).

[98] ILO: *Review of annual report under the Declaration. Part II (Geneva, 2002), pp. 318-325.*

[99] For example, even in pre- "doi-moi" Viet Nam, which had an excellent record in terms of educational provision, some children worked in the then limited spheres of the informal sector, the private sector and the household economy. See T. Le (ed.): *Vietnam family: Responsibilities and resources in the changing of the country* (Hanoi, Social Science Publishing House, 1995).

[100] Summary of the ICFTU-APRO Anti Child Labour Campaign Team Meeting, 24-26 July 2001 (Bangkok, ICFTU-APRO, 2001); and IPEC: *Country report Mongolia: Trafficking-related issues* (Ulaanbaatar, ILO, 2001).

[101] I. Epstein: "Child labour and basic education provision in China", in *International Journal of Educational Development* (Oxford, Pergamon, 1993), Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 227-238.

133. Continuation of residence permits, a relic of the old system, can be a powerful factor in exacerbating poverty and social exclusion by forcing migrants, and their children, either to avoid urban centres (where they might find work) or to live there illegally, thus preventing them gaining access to whatever formal social protection might still exist.

Education: a casualty of transition

134. Along with social protection systems, education has been a frequent casualty of transition, adding to the child labour problem. Schools have often been starved of public funds, with teachers widely affected by non-payment of wages. Increased costs of textbooks and clothes, together with the opportunity of school attendance by children who could otherwise be earning, are all part of an increasing burden on over-stretched family resources. In **Kyrgyzstan**, reduction of government educational allowances has led to a decrease in the number of public schools and overcrowded classrooms. With 55 per cent of the population living in poverty (23 per cent in extreme poverty), many children lose interest in secondary education and prefer to earn money, primarily in selling, transportation, collection or as ancillary workers.[102]

Changing social values

135. A final factor to highlight in the context of transition and child labour is the change in values and aspirations that can accompany societal transformation. In the **Lao People's Democratic Republic**, increased consumerism and a desire for luxury goods has been attributed as a factor motivating adults and children alike to risk migration from rural homes to seek better income-earning opportunities in the cities. This results both in a broken social fabric in the countryside and large groups of young people living at high risk in cities. Given the rapid growth in tourism in that country, it faces the danger of being perceived as a new alternative to the more traditional destinations for sex tourists.[103]

The HIV/AIDS pandemic

Unparalleled shock to development

136. HIV/AIDS is emerging as a key factor affecting children and the pattern of child labour across the world.[104] As a shock to development, it probably has no equal in modern times. Children everywhere are affected by the spread of the virus – directly by its impact on themselves and their family members, and indirectly by its influence on the wider social and economic environment in which they live. At the macro level, HIV/AIDS severely undermines economic growth and productivity; when this occurs in agriculture, there is the accompanying threat to food security. The age and gender composition of entire nations is drastically altered, putting a heavier burden of the dependent population (including children) on the dwindling, most productive age groups.

137. While the ways in which the pandemic affects child labour are as yet under-researched,[105] it is clear that this pandemic is having profound direct and indirect impacts. In turn, child labour fuels, in part, the spread of the disease – through the commercial and other sexual exploitation of children. The

---

[102] IPEC: *Child labour in Kyrgyzstan: An initial study* (Bishkek, ILO, 2001), pp. 10-14.

[103] ILO: *Country paper: Lao People's Democratic Republic*, Working Paper presented at the ILO-Japan Asian Regional Meeting on Trafficking of Children for Labour and Sexual Exploitation, Manila, 10-12 October 2001.

[104] Child labour as a consequence of HIV/AIDS was recognized in a resolution adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 88th Session (Geneva, June 2000).

[105] IPEC is currently carrying out research into the links between HIV/AIDS and child labour in South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

social inequalities that foster the spread of HIV/AIDS mirror in many ways those that perpetuate child labour.[106]

AIDS orphans

138. There are already an estimated 13 million AIDS orphans under the age of 15.[107] This number is expected to increase dramatically in the years to come. Orphanhood as an outcome of HIV/AIDS exposes children to increased risks of discrimination, and ill health and lost opportunities for education and training. During the 1990s, AIDS orphans tended to remain in the care of the extended family. However, evidence from countries such as **Uganda**, **Zambia** and **Zimbabwe** shows these systems are breaking down under stress and that there is an increase in the number of child-headed households and further impoverishment of families where fostered orphans live, which also affects the other children living in those households.

Children compensate for the lost labour of adults

139. HIV/AIDS has a direct impact on children's participation in the workforce. Prolonged periods of illness and eventual death in the family cause dramatic cuts in income and loss of assets. Even before one or both of their parents die of AIDS-related illnesses, children, especially girls, are likely to have to take on a heavier workload within the household, including domestic chores and caring for siblings and sick adults. This can compromise their schooling and their health. Both boys and girls may be obliged to seek income-earning opportunities to make up for the lost adult income and to help pay medical expenses. Children are also likely to be called upon to compensate for the loss of women's labour in farming tasks. Increased migration as a consequence of HIV/AIDS, by both boys and girls, from rural settings to urban areas swells the ranks of children in the urban informal economy.[108] The presence of children on the street and their need for money, food, shelter and companionship all increase their chances of being drawn into casual sexual relationships or into commercial sexual exploitation. This, in turn, increases the risk of their becoming infected with HIV and thus the circle from being affected to becoming infected is completed.

140. It is reported that HIV/AIDS is driving a flow of ever-younger girls into commercial sexual exploitation, often because of long-standing myths about sexually transmitted diseases.[109] Girls from the mountain areas of **Viet Nam**, for example, are said to be in demand in **Cambodia** because they are perceived to decrease the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases.[110]

HIV/AIDS and children's education

141. HIV/AIDS impacts indirectly on child labour through education by affecting both pupil and teacher populations. Research from **Zambia** provides the most thorough assessment so far of the educational disadvantages of AIDS orphans, who are more likely to be out of school than children orphaned for other reasons.[111] Even if children from households with one or more adults affected by HIV/AIDS are not withdrawn totally from school so that they may

---

[106] J. Collins and B. Rau: *AIDS in the context of development* (Geneva, UNRISD/UNAIDS, 2000).

[107] The United Nations has defined AIDS orphans as children under the age of 15 who have lost their mothers or both their parents to HIV/AIDS.

[108] UNICEF: *Listening to the children: Child workers in the shadow of AIDS in eastern and southern Africa* (Nairobi, 2001).

[109] One myth is that younger girls can "disinfect" an HIV-positive person. IPEC: *HIV/AIDS and child labour in sub-Saharan Africa*, Project outline (Geneva, ILO, 2001).

[110] H. van de Glind and C. Coenjaerts: *Combating trafficking in children for labour exploitation in the Mekong subregion: A proposed framework for ILO/IPEC action and proceedings of a Mekong subregional consultation* (Bangkok, ILO, 1998).

[111] Michael Kelly: "The impact of HIV/AIDS on schooling in Zambia", in *Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) Bulletin* (Lusaka, JCTR), 1999, No. 42.

work, their classroom attendance may be sporadic. In **Uganda**, for example, breaks in school attendance have lasted from five weeks to a term and a half; the most common reasons are lack of money to pay school fees and the need for children to help at home with the care of HIV/AIDS patients.[112]

142. Schooling for all children is severely affected by the impact of the pandemic on teachers in countries with high infection rates. In 1998 in **Zambia**, for instance, deaths of teachers equalled two-thirds the number of graduates from teacher training colleges, and the ratio was increasing. Deaths from AIDS-related illnesses deprive schools of their most needed asset. However, teacher absences, because of their own or relatives' illnesses associated with HIV/AIDS, also result in classroom disruptions and lower quality education, and potentially contribute to higher student drop-out and repetition rates. These translate into children's reluctance to attend school and parents' doubts about the usefulness of pursuing their children's education, which increases the chance that they will become child labourers and reduces the future supply of skilled workers, including teachers.

Heightened vulnerability

143. Alongside these various impacts of HIV/AIDS on child labour are the devastating emotional and psychological effects on children of seeing parents, friends, relatives and teachers succumb to the disease, and the fabric of their communities being torn apart. This cannot but lead to a heightened sense of vulnerability to exploitation and discrimination in its many forms, placing children at greater risk of child labour.

Natural disasters and child labour

Poverty and natural disasters closely linked

144. Crises also come in the form of natural disasters – both from the disaster itself and from the economic and other shocks that follow. Hurricanes, floods and earthquakes have devastating and immediate direct human and financial costs. They also bring in their wake far-reaching shocks to development, such as destruction of infrastructure, disruption of essential services, production losses (including food), plummeting income, unemployment, population movements, economic stagnation and price increases. It is no coincidence that natural disaster and poverty seem to go hand in hand. Repeated disasters lead to chronic poverty; funds and resources are almost permanently diverted to relief rather than invested in development. And poverty breeds conditions in which the effects of disaster can be most catastrophic.[113]

Children's lives in turmoil

145. Both adults and children feel the effects of natural disasters, but the intimate social world of children is particularly affected by:

— death or injury of family members, or self-injury;

— heightened risk of ill health and disease in the post-disaster environment;

— homelessness, loss of personal belongings and loss of official identity or other papers;

— loss or damage of family assets and livelihoods (tools, workshops, land, crops, seeds, animals, cash savings, jobs), leading to food shortage, income collapse and possibly indebtedness;

— relocation to camps or elsewhere, loss of kin and neighbourhood networks (informal social protection);

---

[112] ActionAid Education Department: *HIV/AIDS and the education sector: Impacts and responses*, Briefing paper (London, 2000).

[113] For example, floods caused in large part by deforestation, which itself may be a consequence of rural poverty.

- damage to infrastructure and disruption of services in education, health, energy, water supply, sewage and transport;
- looting and other security risks.

146. Under such circumstances, the risks to children, including that of being drawn into child labour, seem clear. But research on what happens to children's labour force participation during shock periods is rare. One of the few exceptions are studies undertaken after the 1998 floods in Dhaka, **Bangladesh**.[114] The survival strategies of the poor in these circumstances tend to be to take out loans of various kinds and reduce food expenditure by buying cheaper food or less of it. No increase in child labour was found, but this may simply be due to the absence of any income-generating opportunities owing to a prolonged downturn in the urban informal economy. Children who worked before the disaster may find that their contribution to family income has become more important. Consequently, a casual commitment to income generation can become more long term. The nature of the work may change; it may become more hazardous. Children who performed what were acceptable light domestic chores before a disaster may subsequently find themselves involved in heavier work that takes more time and that may reduce their school attendance – if indeed the local school still exists.

Armed conflict and child labour

147. As in the case of natural disasters, armed conflict is as much an effect as a cause of poverty and deprivation. Of the 25 countries at the bottom of the 1998 Human Development Index, more than half were suffering the direct or indirect effects of violent conflict.

The costs of conflict

148. Beyond the obvious death, injury and trauma immediately caused by armed conflict, the long-term costs of war include destruction of physical infrastructure, loss of human capital, reduction of savings, capital flight, disruption of formal and informal economic activity and diversion of government expenditure from public services to military expenditure.[115] Once again, children are inevitably affected in dramatic ways, both during a conflict and in its aftermath – and this includes their becoming involved in child labour.[116]

149. This is not a new phenomenon. During the First and Second World Wars, child labour in industrialized countries increased. As women took over jobs vacated by men when they joined the armed forces, so children often took over jobs previously undertaken by women.[117]

Children disproportionately affected by conflict

150. Conflict in recent years has increasingly and disproportionately affected children. The United Nations and UNICEF estimate that between 1986 and 1996, armed conflicts killed 2 million children, left more than a million orphaned, injured 6 million and traumatized over 10 million. Another 13 million

---

[114] See, for example, E. Delap: "Urban children's work during and after the 1998 floods in Bangladesh", in *Development in practice* (Oxford, Carfax Publishing), 2000, Vol. 10, No. 5, pp. 662-673; and S.F. Rashid: "The urban poor in Dhaka City", op. cit.

[115] P. Collier: "On the economic consequences of civil war", in *Oxford Economic Papers* (Oxford, Oxford University Press), 1999, Vol. 51, pp. 168-183.

[116] A report to the United Nations by Graça Machel in 1996 shed considerable light on the situation of children in armed conflict. United Nations: *Promotion and protection of the rights of children*, op.cit.

[117] I. Andrews and M. Hobbs: *Economic effects of the World War upon women and children in Great Britain* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1921).

have been left homeless.[118] War has separated an unknown number of children from their families and their communities, leaving them exposed to sexual and other forms of exploitation.

151. In the course of civil strife the distinction between civilian and combatant becomes increasingly blurred, a phenomenon that affects children as well as adults. As we have seen already, some children are drawn into conflict as combatants and some become involved in support roles. Many more, however, are affected by armed conflict in other ways. Modern armed conflict usually involves some kind of civil strife and often takes the form of low-intensity, long-term conflict. As "normal" economic activity becomes unworkable in the conflict zone, new economies emerge as a means of survival for the general population and to fuel the war machine, and speculative and sometimes illicit activities in private hands (often militias) develop.

New demands for child labour

152. Each of these economies can create new demands for child labour – and the supply is there, as war orphans and children separated from their parents and families find themselves with no option but to work in order to survive. Increased child labour in the informal economy is one of the results of warfare, and children are, as well, often victims of "blunt sanctions" imposed on governments or armed opposition groups.[119] Thus, for example, child labour in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, although not a major pre-war feature, has since been reported to have increased, especially among socially excluded groups such as the Roma who now work long hours in the informal economy.[120] Five years after the conflict in **Rwanda** had ended, it was estimated that between 45,000 and 60,000 households were still headed by children who remained separated from parents or other adult kin. Ninety per cent of these households were headed by girls, who had no regular income and very little support from any source. Unlikely to attend school, these girls were particularly vulnerable to exploitation.[121] In addition, traditional activities by children, such as collecting firewood or water or running errands, may become more risky during and following a conflict because of harassment from soldiers and the dangers of stepping on landmines, being caught up in fighting or being abducted.

Education systems devastated

153. Armed conflict also influences child labour through its effects on education. As the State loses effective control of territory, the terror tactics of insurgents can include targeting schools and teachers. In post-war **Mozambique**, only 25 per cent of eligible children in Manica Province were able to go to primary school as so many schools had been destroyed in wartime.[122] Years of lost schooling take the equivalent time to replace, and hinder the recovery process. Displacement caused by war also disrupts family-based socialization and children's acquisition of life skills, especially in agriculture and crafts. With neither family-based socialization nor formal education, children, whether child labourers or not, grow up ill-equipped to find decent work as youths and adults.

---

[118] United Nations: *Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 1261 (1999) on children and armed conflict*. United Nations General Assembly, 55th Session, New York, 2000.

[119] ibid., p. 9.

[120] Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Foreign Affairs: *National report on follow-up to the World Summit for Children: Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2000), p. 14.

[121] African Development Bank: *African Development Report 2001* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 117.

[122] M. Chingono: "Mozambique: War, economic change and development in Manica Province, 1982-92", in F. Stewart and V. Fitzgerald: *War and underdevelopment. Vol. 2. Case studies*, Queen Elizabeth House Series in Development Studies (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001).

4. Understanding child labour: The foundation for effective abolition

154. The Report so far has illustrated the complexity of the child labour situation in different sectoral and crisis contexts across the world, the factors that come into play in determining whether a child works and the type of work that he or she does, and how this work can often constitute a worst form of child labour. While each situation in which child labour emerges is different, it is clear that there are many common elements that impinge upon the work and school outcomes for children in different situations. Much has been published about the causes and consequences, both economic and social, of child labour. In this section, we highlight some key causal factors and how they interact to bring about child labour.

Causes act at different levels

Heterogeneity in the child labour force

155. The question "Why do children work?" is too general to lead us in the direction of effective action to prevent child labour. We need instead to know why certain children [illegible] groups of children become involved in certain kinds of child labour, especially in its worst forms. Children do not represent a homogeneous category in the labour market: age, sex, ethnicity, social class and relative deprivation appear to interact to affect the type and intensity of work that children perform, as well as whether they work or not.

Child labour and poverty

156. The fact that child labour and poverty are inextricably linked is widely acknowledged and undeniable. In countries with an annual per capita income of US$500 or less (at 1987 prices), the labour force participation of children aged 10-14 is 30-60 per cent, compared to only 10-30 per cent in countries with an annual per capita income of US$501-1000.[123] No one would argue with the general proposition that child labour is both a result and a cause of poverty. Household poverty pushes children into the labour market to earn money to supplement family income or even to survive. Evidence is also clear that, by lowering human capital accumulation, child labour perpetuateshousehold poverty across generations and thereby slows national economic growth and social development.[124]

---

[123] P. Fallon and Z. Tzannatos: *Child labour: Issues and directions for the World Bank* (Washington, World Bank, 1998). Nonetheless, the decline in the labour force participation of children is less marked as GDP rises in more affluent countries.

[124] R. Galli: *The economic impact of child labour*, Discussion Paper DP/128/2001 (Geneva, International Institute for Labour Studies, 2001), p. 21.

157. However, in the absence of further analysis, putting child labour at the doorstep of poverty unfortunately does little to help us move towards solving the problem. We need to look at the different aspects of poverty, and indeed the other causes of child labour, and how these interact with one another, so that we can fully grasp the dynamic forces pushing and pulling children into different types of labour. Only then can effective and sustainable measures to combat child labour be devised, measures that will act on all of these causes simultaneously.

Three levels of causality

158. Causes can be analysed at three levels:

- *Immediate causes* are the most visible and obvious: they act directly at the level of the child and the family. Household-income poverty (income not meeting cash needs for subsistence) and cash-flow crises caused by shocks to the household economy are key. For example, with a sick mother, an absent father and no food, the eldest child in the family may well pick up a bucket and cloth and go to wash windscreens.
- *Underlying causes* refer to values and situations that may predispose a family or community to accept or even encourage child labour for boys and/or girls. Perceptions of poverty come into play at this level; for example, "consumerism" may drive children and parents alike to seek to earn more money to buy the consumer goods that are becoming increasingly available.
- *Structural or root causes* act at the level of the larger economy and society, influencing the enabling environment in which child labour can either flourish or be controlled. Aggregate national poverty (low Gross Domestic Product) operates at this level.

159. Table 5, showing examples of causes acting at each level, illustrates that, while income poverty is indeed an important causal factor for child labour, it is certainly not the only one. In fact, when limited to its income aspect, poverty has considerably less explanatory power for child labour than other factors such as inequality, lack of education, high dependence on agriculture in the economy as a whole and slow demographic transition.[125]

Poverty goes beyond lack of income

160. Poverty has many dimensions beyond a mere lack of income and expenditure, and children have their own perceptions of it. In Ho Chi Minh City, **Viet**

Table 5. Levels of causality for child labour

Immediate causes	Underlying causes	Structural or root causes
Limited or no cash or food stocks; increase in price of basic goods	Breakdown of extended family and informal social protection systems	Low/declining national income
Family indebtedness	Uneducated parents; high fertility rates	Inequalities between nations and regions; adverse terms of trade
Household shocks, e.g. death or illness of income earner, crop failure	Cultural expectations regarding children, work and education	Societal shocks, e.g. war, financial and economic crises, transition, HIV/AIDS
No schools; or schools of poor quality or irrelevant	Discriminatory attitudes based on gender, caste, ethnicity, national origin, etc.	Insufficient financial or political commitment for education, basic services and social protection; "bad" governance
Demand for cheap labour in informal micro-enterprises	Perceived poverty: desire for consumer goods and better living standards	Social exclusion of marginal groups and/or lack of legislation and/or effective enforcement
Family business or farm cannot afford hired labour	Sense of obligation of children to their families, and of "rich" people to the "poor"	Lack of decent work for adults

---

[125] **I. Ahmad: "Getting rid of child labour",** ***in Economic and Political Weekly*** **(Mumbai), 1999, Vol. XXXIV, No. 27, pp. 1815-1822.**

Nam, poor children talk of lack of self-esteem, being considered as inferior by wealthier households and being beaten by wealthier children.[126] Poverty has many non-measurable aspects in addition to low income, all of which conspire to put children in poor families generally at greater risk of being drawn into child labour.

The demand for child labour

Why employ children?

161. How and why do children get offers of work? While there is not always a readily identifiable employer in relation to child labour, it is generally recognized that employers who engage under-age workers tend to be found in small units with simple production technologies and relatively little capital.[127] They may give work to their own children as well as to children from other families. In both cases, the employers' perceptions play an important role. Such employers may prefer children because they are paid less than adults on a daily rate (but not piece-work) basis, because of beliefs about their suitability for certain jobs,[128] and because more work can be extracted from them owing to their greater docility and lack of awareness of, and ability to claim, their rights. Traditions and cultural expectations also play a role. In some communities, employers feel a social obligation to offer income-earning opportunities to poor families, including their children.

Segmentation in the child labour market

162. The kind of work offered to girls and boys reflects gender roles; sex segregation in the market for child labour often mirrors that in the adult labour market.[129] Other jobs are "children's jobs". In the home, this may mean tasks that save an adult's time or energy, such as running errands, caring for smaller children or weeding a family vegetable plot. In the labour market, children's jobs may involve work they are good at because they are children, such as begging, or work for which they can be paid less than adults, such as unskilled time-consuming tasks on agricultural plantations. Children's jobs also differ according to their age, in line with their evolving capacities. The position of both children and youth in the labour market in general reflects their lowly status in society.[130] Children from socially excluded groups may find themselves at the very bottom of the pile. In northern Europe, for example, child labourers are likely to be of African or Turkish origin, in **Canada**, they tend to be of Asian descent, and in **Brazil**, from indigenous groups.

Children as unpaid family workers

163. Given the predominance of child labour in the informal economy, the vast majority of working children are likely to be working on their own account or in small-scale family-based enterprises (often their own family, thereby becoming employed by their parents). For example, in **Sri Lanka**, of all economically active children aged 5-17, 77 per cent are unpaid family workers assisting in both agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises.[131] Of course,

---

[126] D. Narayan et al.: *Voices of the poor: Crying out for change* (New York, Oxford University Press for the World Bank, 2000), p. 42.

[127] R. Anker et al. (eds.): *Economics of child labour in hazardous industries of India* (Baroda, Centre for Operations Research and Training, 1998).

[128] Research, however, has largely discredited the "nimble fingers" argument, showing that most work performed by children is also done by adults. Children are also less productive than adults.

[129] This is mirrored in many vocational training schemes, which provide training in sewing and hairdressing for girls and in carpentry and car repair for boys.

[130] D. Elson: "The differentiation of children's labour in the capitalist labour market", in *Development and Change* (The Hague, International Development Studies Institute). 1982, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 479-498.

[131] IPEC: Summary findings of child labour survey in Sri Lanka, 1999, see www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/simpoc/index.htm

it must be remembered that *economic activity of children* is not the same as the *child labour* to be abolished; the interaction of the child's age with the type and conditions of work determines the boundaries of the latter. However, the evidence is clear that working in a family enterprise, or with family members, does not necessarily protect a child from hazardous or otherwise detrimental forms of child labour.

164. Evidence from economists shows that it is not always children from the poorest or landless households who work in a family agricultural undertaking rather than go to school. Families who own land and livestock may have a greater need for the unpaid labour of household members, as they cannot afford to pay for hired casual labour.[132] In addition, parents may feel that children should work to secure their inheritance. Another seemingly perverse aspect is that there may be more child labour in relatively less deprived areas of a country as, given the greater amount of cash circulating, there are more economic opportunities. And while natural disasters can temporarily cripple the informal economy, thus cutting off demand for child labour, conversely, when and where there is a degree of economic growth, there may be a concomitant rise in demand for child labour.

Household decision-making about child labour

Parental choice models of decision-making

165. The underlying and structural or root causes of child labour set the macro-level backdrop against which micro-level decisions are taken about whether children in an individual household will engage in child labour. Although, as we have seen, some children are coerced into labour (through abduction, drugging or forms of slavery including debt bondage), most children work as a result of conscious decisions. Parental choice models, based on the notion that parents or other adults choose to send children to work rather than to school, assume that adults decide according to rational economic criteria, for selfish reasons or out of ignorance.

Children's reasons for working

166. But children, at least those of a certain age and maturity, may also decide to work for a variety of reasons: to contribute to family survival or to ensure their own survival as orphans or street children, because they dislike school or are being abused there, to escape an untenable family situation, for cash to purchase anything from school books to designer clothes to drugs, to feel independent, or even simply to avoid boredom in the absence of other things to do, school included. Whereas parental choice mechanisms have been extensively studied, little is known about how children make decisions.

167. Parental attitudes, reflecting cultural norms, nonetheless play a major role in sending a child to work or to school. Parents' expectations that children will provide for them in their old age may lead to their having larger numbers of children and, where household incomes are limited, there may be a lower level of investment in each child, including in education. Parents may genuinely believe that they are doing the best for their children by allowing or encouraging them to work, not realizing the hazards that the work might entail. In some cases, they and their children may well not be at all aware of the reality of the situation that lies in store. This is particularly true in the case of trafficking, which starts with promises of hotel work or training opportunities but ends in commercial sexual exploitation or forced domestic labour.

---

[132] S. Bhalotra and C. Heady: *Child farm labour: The wealth paradox*, Bristol Discussion Paper No. 00/492, see www.bris.ac.uk/Debts/Economics/research/pdffiles/dp00492.pdf

Gender influences on school and work decisions

168. Gender is an important factor influencing decision-making about children's work and education. The data presented in Chapter 2 show that, in aggregate, more boys than girls are involved in child labour, and we have seen that the situation varies according to the sector of work. The effect of gender varies across countries and cultures, as gender roles are socially, not biologically, determined. In societies where education enhances girls' status for marriage, girls may be more likely than boys to get a good education. Conversely, there are situations where girls are encouraged to stay at school while their brothers are pushed to leave school to go to work, because more jobs are available for boys. Yet cultural norms can exclude girls from certain types of training or, indeed, from education altogether. Because of limited expectations of girls securing decent, paid work as adults owing to women's generally low status in society, returns on their education may be perceived as lower than that of boys – as reflected in sometimes markedly lower primary-school enrolment rates for girls than for boys (e.g. in South Asia).

Children's contribution to household income

169. The need for additional income is clearly a primary consideration for parents and children alike in deciding whether children should work. Lack of decent income-earning opportunities for youth and adults is a root cause of child labour. Fluctuations in household income and their effect on a household's short-term cash flow, as well as average household income over the month or year, are important in determining whether children's work will be just a temporary stop-gap measure or a more long-term one. Children's work in many cases contributes a substantial fraction of household income, usually around 20 per cent.[133] This could indicate that, for these households, the child's income is necessary to bridge the gap between survival and starvation. However, evidence shows that not all poor households with similar levels of income resort to the use of child labour. Conversely, child labour is found in households whose income lies above the poverty line. It is therefore clear that factors beyond the need for additional family income are at play in determining child labour outcomes.

Many factors at play

170. Overall, decisions about whether or not a particular child works depend on a mixture of need (whether the family or child actually requires the income), opportunity (whether work is available for children), values (about children, work of boys and girls and their futures, responsibility towards family members, education and consumer goods) and perceptions (whether the child or family has images of a better life that can be secured by the child working).

Demographic change

The influence of family size and structure

171. Decisions about child labour are also influenced by the size and structure of the family (e.g. number, sex, age, spacing and birth order of children, presence of elderly or disabled family members, number of adults of working age). Changes in family form and function affect children's participation in the labour market. The increased numbers of child- and grandparent-headed households, principally linked to HIV/AIDS and armed conflict, but for other reasons as well, means increased pressure on children to work.

---

[133] See, for example, B. Sharma and V. Mittar: *Child labour and the urban informal sector* (New Delhi, Deep and Deep Publications, 1990); and H.A. Patrinos and G. Psacharopoulos: "Educational performance and child labour in Paraguay", in *International Journal of Educational Development* (Oxford, Elsevier Science Ltd.), 1994, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 47-60.

Table 6. Proportion of children under 18 in the total population (1999)

	Total population (thousands)	Children under 18	
		Number (thousands)	Percentage
Industrialized countries	851 638	189 233	22
Developing countries	4 776 909	1 857 584	39
Least developed countries	629 587	309 976	49
World	5 961 655	2 125 143	36

Source: Based on United Nations Population Division: *World Population Prospects: The 2000 revision* (New York, United Nations, 2001).

172. Slow demographic transition in the poorest parts of the world results in a continued supply of children available for the labour market (see table 6). The age group normally regarded as economically active (15-65 years) has a considerable burden if it is to support the dependent age groups (young and old). HIV/AIDS is exacerbating the situation in the countries most severely affected by the pandemic as it hits the most productive age groups of men and women the hardest. This leads to obvious pressure on families to expand the economically active age group by bringing younger children into the workforce.

Decreasing fertility rates

173. Decreasing fertility rates in developing countries offer some cause for optimism for a future reduction in child labour. Fertility in these countries has dropped to just under three children per woman, about half the rate it was 30 years ago. In some countries, including in **Mexico** and in parts of South-East Asia, fertility has declined sharply over the past generation, creating the demographic bonus of a large cohort of 15-24-year-olds ready to enter the workforce, without the pressure of an equally large generation of children behind them.[134]

Parents and children on the move

174. Natural disaster, armed conflict or simply restricted economic opportunity in rural areas may push families to migrate to seek their livelihood elsewhere, either in their own country or across borders. Younger children may migrate along with their parents while adolescents may set out on their own.

Migration increases children's vulnerability

175. Although there is no fixed or universal relationship between migration and child labour in places of origin or destination, there are a number of factors that increase children's vulnerability. For example, migration separates children from their usual support networks; they may not speak the local language, which can cause problems for schooling; they may be from a different ethnic group or nationality, exposing them to discrimination; and their lack of a birth certificate, once away from their place of birth, effectively denies them official identity and often means they cannot access services.

176. Meanwhile, in the migrants' communities of origin, children may be called upon to fill gaps left in the labour market or to undertake household tasks that were previously the responsibility of adults.

---

[134] "The state of world population 2001 edition", in *POPLINE* (Washington, DC, The Population Institute), 2001, Vol. 23, 7 Nov.

The role of social protection

A broad definition of social protection

177. Different agencies have different definitions of social protection. For the ILO, the term covers not only social security but also non-statutory schemes. It extends to income security, health and safety at work and the environment, conditions of work and family issues, pensions and retirement. In its very broadest sense, social protection can be taken to mean all "the public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society". It aims to address both the current deprivation and vulnerability of poor people as well as the need of the currently non-poor for security in the face of shocks and events beyond their control. Public actions may be taken by institutions in government or by civil society, or by a combination of the two.[135]

178. According to ILO estimates, more than half of the world's population (workers and their dependants) is excluded from any type of social security protection,[136] and perhaps 80 per cent do not have adequate protection.[137] This is the case for the vast majority of people in developing countries; even in some of the richest countries there are large and growing gaps.

Reasons for exclusion from formal systems

179. Workers in the informal economy, where most child labourers and their families are to be found, are not usually covered by public provision of social security, which operates largely through formal sector employment. Reasons for their exclusion from these systems include the practical difficulties of collecting contributions from them and their employers, their unwillingness or inability to pay contributions (especially when the benefits on offer do not match what they consider to be their most important needs, in particular for health care) and their distrust of the management of formal schemes.[138] Child-headed and grandparent-headed households are especially difficult to reach through formal social protection systems and welfare, particularly if their members are migrants without official identities.

Informal support systems important for the poor

180. Informal support and solidarity systems are widespread in the face of inadequate formal, publicly funded social protection and social welfare services, especially but not exclusively in developing countries. Far from being net recipients of social support, children may be important contributors to such systems. Children are valued for their labour inputs to the household economy during childhood and, as they grow up, as social insurance for periods when sickness and ageing affect the older generations in the family. Poor households tend to rely most heavily on transfers from different non-state sources for their survival, such as kin, community and religious groups. Children may make this kind of "social capital" work, for example, by running errands for secluded women in traditional societies,[139] or by being fostered between or within families for the care of the elderly or other children. But such traditional forms of support may break down in the face of crises, such as HIV/AIDS, and increasingly market-oriented economies, which may exclude the poorest families who simply have too few resources to enter into reciprocal arrangements.

---

[135] A. Norton, T. Conway and M. Foster: *Social protection concepts and approaches: Implications for policy and practice in international development*, Working paper 143 (London, Overseas Development Institute, 2001).

[136] ILO: *Social security: Issues, challenges and prospects*, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 89th Session, Geneva, 2001, p. 3.

[137] ILO: *Social protection sector* (Geneva, 2001), p.1.

[138] ILO: *Social security: Issues, challenges and prospects*, op. cit. p. 26.

[139] E. Schildkrout: "The employment of children in Kano", in G. Rodgers and C. Standing (eds.): *Child work, poverty and underdevelopment* (Geneva, ILO, 1981), pp. 81-112.

Education and child labour

181. Just as child labour is inextricably linked to poverty, so is its effective abolition linked to education. While accessible, good quality educational opportunities can help keep children out of unacceptable forms of work, the absence of public education systems, quality schools and training programmes serves to perpetuate child labour. Child labour in turn prevents children attending and benefiting from school.

Declining investment in schools

182. Trends in school enrolment reflect government expenditure patterns. Structural adjustment programmes reduced government budgets for social expenditure, leading to a reduction in primary-school enrolment in a number of African countries and a decline in access to quality education there and in Latin America.[140] A similar experience has occurred in transition countries such as **Mongolia**, which not too long ago had the highest literacy rate in Asia. Economic privatization has affected about 35,000 herding families whose children used to receive their education in boarding schools and, during their vacations, worked with the animals. The Government no longer has the funds to continue with schooling and, in any case, many children have had to drop out of school to assist with herding activities, a number helping out in households to which they are not related.[141] Likewise, expenditure on education in the **Russian Federation** between 1989 and 1996 fell by one-third,[142] with teachers widely affected by non-payment of wages.

Poverty of the state is no excuse

183. While poverty of the family may keep many children out of school, poverty of the State can never be accepted as a reason to deny children's right to education. Publicly funded education is an escape route from poverty. However, there are many places throughout the world where schools simply do not exist, or exist as buildings but have no teachers. Those schools with buildings and teachers may have no books, paper or pencils. Access to information technology is only a distant dream for most schools in the world.

Limited recognition of informal education systems

184. School curricula are frequently outdated, gender-biased and irrelevant to contemporary needs. Vocational training often does not match the needs of the local labour market, and it is gender-stereotyped, under-resourced and unrealistically long in duration for the poor. Official recognition of the potential role of informal education or training, particularly for children who have had little or no exposure to formal schooling, remains limited. Literacy programmes, "second chance" programmes for out-of-school youth and skills certification for young people who have learnt a craft informally are the exception rather than the rule. Apprenticeship systems have potential, but in some instances they may turn out to be exploitative (see box 4.1).

Denial of freedom of association

185. Teachers face inadequate infrastructure and overcrowded classrooms. Because of low or irregular payment, or even non-payment of wages, they may have to hold down two jobs to feed their families. In some countries, teachers are denied the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining that might enable them to improve their situation. Under such conditions, even the most dedicated teachers are likely to lose their motivation.

186. The educational system reflects the inequalities that are to be found outside the classroom. Children who are exhausted from coping with both lessons

---

[140] R. van der Hoeven: *Poverty and structural adjustment: Some remarks on tradeoffs between equity and growth*, Employment Paper 2000/4 (ILO, Geneva, 2000), p. 11.

[141] IPEC: *Country programme progress report: Mongolia* (Geneva, ILO, 2001); and Summary of the ICFTU-APRO Anti Child Labour Campaign Team Meeting, 24-26 July 2001, Bangkok.

[142] UNICEF: *Education for all?* The MONEE Project, UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Regional Monitoring Report No. 5 (Florence, UNICEF, 1998), figure 2.11.

Box 4.1

Apprenticeship: Training or child labour?

Apprenticeship is a means of on-the-job training of both semi-skilled and skilled workers that takes many forms in different places and at different times. It can involve employers, the government, the trainee and sometimes also workers' organizations, and it can be formal or informal in nature. In many situations, it is a sound route to acquiring skills for the adult labour market. However, if not well structured or supervised, it can lead to abuse.

In sub-Saharan Africa, apprenticeships based on traditional fostering arrangements involve the apprentice learning by watching the "master" and starting out as little more than a tool holder and an errand boy. Although this has been a successful way of transferring skills down the generations, it is potentially exploitative, as the period of training may not be fixed and the range of skills learned may be very narrow. It may essentially keep the young worker in a state of dependency well into adulthood.

Similar systems exist elsewhere in the world. In Pakistan, for example, children may work as informal apprentices to an *ustad* (master) for 10-12 years, becoming semi-skilled workers and later taking on their own child apprentices.

Written contracts can be established, as happens in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo, and certificates provided on successful completion of training. After this, the apprentice may become a co-worker with the master until leaving to set up his/her own business. The system is subject to labour inspection, with penalties if violations occur.

and work may be ostracized in the classroom or subjected to corporal punishment, thus reducing their enthusiasm for learning.

Girls at particular risk

187. Girls are at particular risk of exclusion from school and comprise around 60 per cent of the children worldwide who do not attend primary school. Parents may prefer to invest in their sons' education and keep their daughters at home to contribute to the household economy. Cultural traditions may prevent girls from attending co-educational classes, or schools may be so far from home and constitute such an unsafe environment that girls are effectively excluded by concerns for their protection. In some countries, such as the **United Republic of Tanzania**, there has been a practice of excluding a girl who becomes pregnant from school, while the boy who fathered the child could continue his studies.[143] Once a girl has become a mother, she is considered an adult and therefore no longer eligible to go to school. However, some arguments put forward in favour of girls' education illustrate the deeply engrained nature of perceptions of gender (see box 4.2).

Hidden costs of school

188. The cost of education is also a factor. If education is to be a viable option for the working children of poor families, these families must find ways to compensate for the cash income or labour lost when a child attends school. Even free education, where there are no tuition fees, is not without its cash cost for necessary supplies and transport. The amount of money required to keep children in school can therefore be quite substantial, especially for families with more than one school-age child. For example, in the **United Republic of Tanzania**, the average annual cost of primary schooling in 2000 was estimated to be about 63,000 shillings (US$80) for fees, books, charges for buildings, examinations, uniform and shoes, transport and food. At the time of calculation, this amount for one child represented half the income of

---

[143] NGO Report on the United Republic of Tanzania to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, 15 Nov. 2000, see www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.27/Tanzania.pdf

Box 4.2

Why educate girls?

Girls are much more likely than boys not to receive primary school education. In much international discussion of the need to improve this situation, the well-known correlation between female education and child survival is given as the main justification. The case for educating girls is thus all too often related to their future role as mothers rather than to their own social and economic empowerment or their human right to education.

Unless the education of girls is promoted and valued for its own sake, in the context of the overall pursuit of gender equality, parents will continue to find reasons not to send their daughters to school. This is especially so in societies where the status of women is subordinate to that of men and where women are valued primarily for their reproductive role rather than for their productive work.

many poor rural families, who usually have several children.[144] Mechanisms to compensate for a child's lost income and the cash costs of school through, for example, support for adult income generation and cash stipends, remain rare.

Varied combinations of work and school

189. Policy-makers need to recognize that the relationship between school and work for children is not straightforward, and nor are these mutually exclusive options for many children, who find themselves trying to do both.[145] New estimates by the ILO indicate that, globally, approximately 7 per cent of all children in the 5-9 age group combine work and school, as do 10 per cent of those aged 10-14 and 11 per cent of those aged 15-17 (see table 7).

190. School performance is bound to suffer as a result of attendance made irregular by child labour. However, it should be remembered that for children above the minimum age for employment, training and work can, of course, be fully compatible. For children still at school some light work that does not interfere with their education is not problematic, subject to certain conditions.

Table 7. Global estimates of the activity status of children in 2000

Activity status	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-17 years
Percentage at work	12	23	42.5
■ At work only	5	13	31
■ At work and at school	7	10	11
Percentage at school but not at work	68	67	43.5
Percentage neither at school nor at work[1]	20	10	14

[1] Children neither at school nor at work comprise a number of groups, e.g. children who are disabled or chronically ill, children who are too young to attend school, children who have no access to school yet do not work, children who are looking for work, children (especially girls) who are engaged in domestic chores and therefore do not count as being at work, and children at play.

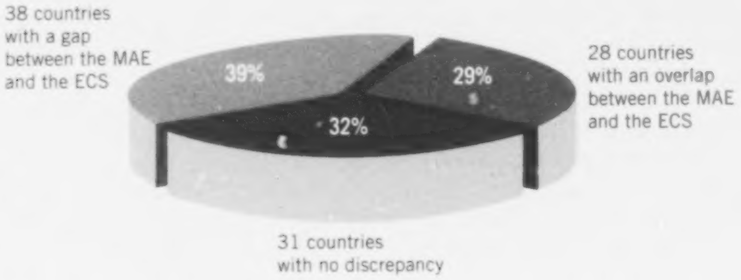
Source: ILO estimates for 2000.

---

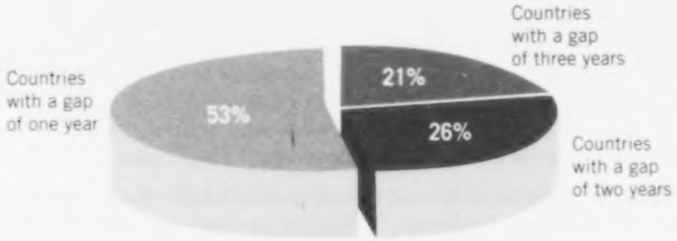
[144] ILO/UNCTAD: *The minimum income for school attendance (MISA) initiative: Achieving international development goals in African least developed countries* (Geneva, ILO/UNCTAD Advisory Group, 2001).

[145] Six groups can be distinguished in the 5-15 age group of school-age children: go to school and have never worked; attend school and work; work and have left school early because of work; work and attend some kind of non-formal education; work and have never attended school; have neither worked nor gone to school.

Figure 5. Discrepancies between the minimum age for employment (MAE) and the end of compulsory schooling (ECS) in national legislation



Length of the gap between the MAE and the ECS



Source: Based on data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: *World Education Report 2000* (Paris, UNESCO, 2000); and ILO: *Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations*, Report III (Part 1A), reports received for Convention No. 138 under article 22 of the Constitution for 1998-2001.

Policy inconsistencies between education and employment

191. There are often policy inconsistencies in the school-leaving age and the minimum age for entry into employment. Figure 5 shows that only 31 of the 91 countries for which data are available had the same school-leaving age and minimum age for entry into employment.[146] In some cases, there was a three-year gap. In countries where there is such a discrepancy, what are these young people to do between the age at which compulsory schooling ends and the age at which legal work can begin? And, in countries where the minimum age for employment is lower than the school-leaving age, what message does this give about the seriousness of the government's commitment to achieve education for all? A similar problem of contradictory ages for leaving school and entering apprenticeships exists in some countries as well.

192. Achieving policy coherence in this area is made more difficult by the prevailing divide between the government ministries responsible for education and those responsible for labour and employment, each of which has

---

[146] A similar situation is revealed in the 2002 ILO *Review of annual reports under the Declaration*, Part I, in which only six countries out of 16 reporting on this issue indicated that the minimum age for employment was the same as the school-leaving age. In seven countries there was an overlap, and in three there was a gap (p. 25).

separate objectives, budgets, decision-making structures and delivery mechanisms. As a result, the link between those campaigning for the abolition of child labour and those calling for education for all tends to be weak at all levels.

193. In some cases, especially in West Africa and in Latin America, the situation is further complicated by the differing definitions of a child in the different legal instruments. Confusion between the status of those under 18 and whether they are children, minors or young persons leads to further incoherence in policy.

Conclusion

194. There are many interlinked explanations for child labour. No single factor can fully explain its persistence and, in some cases, its growth. The way in which different causes, at different levels, interact with each other ultimately determines whether or not an individual child becomes a child labourer.

Children's work endlessly varied and infinitely volatile

195. Part I of this Report has portrayed a panorama of the kinds of work that children perform across the world. It has provided a sobering glimpse into the hazards that many children face while working. Children's participation in the labour force at the start of the twenty-first century is endlessly varied and infinitely volatile, responding to changing market and social conditions. This context is matched by the flexibility of the large, unprotected, potential child labour force. Poverty and social exclusion, labour mobility, discrimination on the basis of sex and other grounds, and lack of adequate social protection and educational opportunity all come into play in influencing child labour outcomes.

196. What does this mean for action to combat child labour? Experience shows that a combination of economic growth, respect for labour standards, universal education and social protection, together with a better understanding of the needs and rights of children, can bring about a significant reduction in child labour. It tells us that continuous vigilance is needed to sustain improvements in the face of deep and rapid social, economic and political change. Child labour is a stubborn problem that, even if overcome in certain places or sectors, will seek out opportunities to reappear in new and often unanticipated ways.

Versatile and adaptable responses

197. Our responses to the problem must be similarly versatile and adaptable, based firmly on the reality of child labour in a given national context. There is no simple, quick fix for child labour, nor a universal blueprint for action: if there were, a great deal of the problem would have disappeared long ago. Concerted, long-term efforts that draw creatively upon the wealth of experience already gathered in fighting child labour are needed. In Part II, we shall review the action that has been taken so far at local, national and international levels to respond to this challenge.

Part II. The global response to child labour: Turning indignation into action

1. Better information means stronger action

Turning indignation into action

198. The world's indignation about the many injustices faced by its children is now being translated into action, on an ever-larger scale, to rid communities, sectors and countries of child labour. Long-term policies can create an environment in which recourse to child labour simply makes no sense for employers, for families or for children. Short-term, targeted initiatives to withdraw children from labour and to provide them with viable alternatives are needed if today's child labourers are to benefit. The ILO and its partners are now able to draw upon a growing body of experience in policies and programmes that work and can be adapted and applied to different situations.

Research and action go hand in hand

199. Research on child labour provides the indispensable bridge between the child labour problem described in Part I of this Report, and the effective action to combat it, which is examined in Part II. Building understanding of child labour and taking action to abolish it must go hand in hand. Convincing data can be used both to reinforce advocacy against child labour and to promote the political will to correct it. Thorough, accurate baseline analysis of the child labour situation leads to the design of effective policies and programmes, thus saving time and money and enhancing sustainability. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation enable projects to stay on track with their objectives and draw attention to the lessons to be learned.

200. Child labour is a complex socio-economic phenomenon and hence presents many research challenges. For many years, the lack of good information and statistical data on child labour stood in the way of finding effective ways to tackle the problem. While many promising new approaches to child labour research have emerged in recent years, with the spotlight now on its worst forms, even more innovative methods are urgently needed.

The ILO and child labour research

National child labour surveys with SIMPOC support

201. Research innovations contributed by the ILO over the past two decades include advances in measuring household and women's work, informal sector studies and the use of ethnographic techniques and time-use studies, all of which have served to improve the quality of information relevant to child

labour.[1] Throughout the 1990s, the ILO worked to improve methods for gathering quantitative data on child labour; the latest results have been presented in Part I, Chapter 2. IPEC's Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) now provides technical and financial support to countries to carry out child labour surveys, set up national data banks and disseminate information. The data, which are disaggregated by sex, serve as essential tools in identifying the incidence, scope and causes of child labour, providing information for awareness raising and monitoring trends and evaluating the impact of interventions.

202. By the end of 2001, 52 countries had requested SIMPOC assistance, 11 surveys had been completed and 26 more were under way. SIMPOC has also developed a set of indicators on child labour to assist in programme development, impact monitoring and country comparisons. These indicators help to track the magnitude, distribution and consequences of child labour.

203. In response to demand for policy research and analysis, IPEC has recently investigated the economics of child labour and its elimination, the impact of financial crises on child labour, the effectiveness of social-labelling programmes, and the links between HIV/AIDS and child labour in southern Africa.

Interagency synergies

204. By working together, agencies can capitalize on each other's strengths. For example, the ILO and UNICEF have jointly developed a Rapid Assessment (RA) methodology, which combines a wide range of data-gathering techniques, as a timely and cost-effective research approach. This is being used to provide information on hard-to-reach groups of children such as those in prostitution, trafficked children, domestic workers and children in other worst forms. By the end of 2001, 38 RAs had been completed in 23 countries, focusing on different worst forms of child labour. In addition to generating information for programme design, important methodological lessons emerging from the RAs include the value of studying situations where child labour is not used as well as those where it is, and of talking to children who do not work as well as to those who do; the need for additional surveys to produce baseline data against which progress can be measured; and the need to focus on children and not solely on a particular sector where there are worst forms of child labour, because children may simply move from one sector to another.

205. The ILO and the World Health Organization (WHO) are also collaborating with a child labour task force working in the WHO Collaborating Centres in Occupational Health to support the development of an operational definition of hazardous child labour.

Research challenges and innovations

Under-researched topics and groups of child labourers

206. Despite increased knowledge of child labour, important gaps in understanding it remain. For example, more needs to be known about the interplay between micro-level decision-making by families (e.g. choosing between work and school) and macro-level decision-making by enterprises and governments. There are certain groups of children about whom relatively little is known, including child domestic workers, children affected by armed conflict (not only child combatants), children in prostitution and children involved in illicit activities such as drug trafficking.

---

[1] See, for example, A. Morice: "The exploitation of children in the 'informal sector'", in G. Rodgers and G. Standing (eds.): *Child work, poverty and underdevelopment* (Geneva, ILO, 1981), pp. 131-158, which was influential in legitimizing the use of methods other than survey questionnaires in studies of child work in the informal sector.

207. A topic requiring further investigation is occupational safety and health in relation to children. Hard evidence about the short- and long-term effects on children of different working conditions and environments is relatively scarce, although there are some exceptions. While it is helpful to begin with lists of occupations and working conditions that place children at risk, this does not necessarily resolve some pressing questions, such as "How does one decide whether one kind of work is more detrimental to children than another? How much physical risk equates with how much psychosocial jeopardy? How would short- and long-term effects be compared?"[2]

Simple tools for assessing hazards at work

208. The Hazard Rating Matrix (HRM) is one simple tool, developed in the **Philippines** (see box 1.1) that can be used to help assess the hazards involved in work which might, at first sight, not appear harmful to children, such as vegetable cultivation on a family plot.[3]

Innovative research by the ILO and WHO

209. There is a clear research role in this area for the ILO and WHO, in collaboration with the public health community as a whole. The health assessment carried out by the WHO Regional Office for the Americas/Pan American Health Organization, in collaboration with IPEC, on children working in fishing, on sugar-cane plantations and in garbage dumps in **El Salvador** represents the beginning of a new model for this kind of research. The ILOs' InFocus Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment has a solid foundation on which to build more in-depth knowledge of the hazards that children face at work.

210. Better information on schooling is also needed. Sex-, age- and location-disaggregated data on drop-out and repetition rates, absenteeism and failure to transfer from primary to secondary education, when linked to data on number of hours, type and intensity of children's work outside school, would help build an understanding of the linkages between child labour and school performance.

Children as partners in research

211. One important recent advance for child labour research is the widespread acceptance that children are important partners in generating valid information about their lives. This means that, although adults' perceptions are not devalued, the adults themselves are no longer considered to be the sole authorities on children's lives. As children cannot always verbally express themselves well, researchers have to find alternative methods to elicit information, for example, through role plays, drawings and group discussions.[4] Such methods are being incorporated into IPEC's Rapid Assessments. Box 1.2 shows the outcomes of consultations with children held during the planning of the Time-Bound Programme in the **United Republic of Tanzania**.

Multidisciplinary perspectives on children's lives

212. A holistic approach to research about children takes into account all dimensions of their lives – work, school, home, service provision, community life, relationships with adults or other children – and how these elements interact. A wide range of disciplines can contribute, including demography, economics and statistics, epidemiology, geography, law, nutrition, psychology, public health and social anthropology. Ideally, research should study children over time, so as to shed light on the changing nature of their work, school and home lives, which cannot be captured in a snap-shot of what children are doing at a single point in time.

---

[2] ILO: *Child labour: Targeting the intolerable*, op. cit., p. 21.

[3] IPEC: *Defining hazardous undertakings for young workers*, op. cit.

[4] J. Boyden and J. Ennew (eds.): *Children in focus: A manual for participatory research with children* (Stockholm, Rädda Barnen, 1997).

Box 1.1

The Hazard Rating Matrix

Degree of safety	Work intensity		
	Light	Moderate	Heavy
Safe	Totally allowed for young workers	Conditionally allowed for young workers	Very hazardous; should be banned
Moderately safe	Conditionally allowed for young workers	Very hazardous; should be banned	Very hazardous; should be banned
Unsafe	Very hazardous; should be banned	Very hazardous; should be banned	Very hazardous; should be banned

The Hazard Rating Matrix covers (1) the degree of safety of working conditions and (2) the intensity of work. It shows, for example, that work in safe conditions at moderate intensity, and in moderately safe conditions at light intensity, can be conditionally allowed for young workers. Using a specialized checklist that covers factors such as work environment, materials and equipment used, labour inspectors can classify the degree of safety. Work intensity is measured by considering the frequency and duration of work, together with weight/resistance (relative to the total body weight of the young worker), body position and other movements involved in the task. The number of tasks undertaken over a period of time would be cumulative. Taking decisions without adult supervision, and tasks involving bending, reaching or stretching beyond a child's normal range, would automatically lead to the work being classified as not acceptable for young workers.

Family-based vegetable farming might not be regarded as a worst form. However, under the Hazard Rating Matrix, although the working environment and tools might be favourable, contact with soil and water, both of which are sources of infection, using a heavy watering can and not wearing protective clothing would lead to a work intensity classification of *heavy*, despite a *safe or moderately safe* degree of safety. The work is thus identified as "Very hazardous; should be banned", i.e. as a worst form of child labour.

Monitoring child labour

213. The term "monitoring" is used in a variety of ways with respect to child labour: monitoring a country's compliance with labour standards (addressed by ILO supervisory mechanisms and thus not covered here), monitoring specific projects to ensure they have the desired impact (programme monitoring and evaluation or PME) and monitoring child labour in a locality or occupational sector to verify that children are being removed from hazardous or inappropriate work and to track what happens to them afterwards (child labour monitoring or CLM). Systems for PME have been strengthened considerably in recent years. Sound monitoring and evaluation mean that project performance can be continually improved by incorporating the lessons learned, both positive and negative.

Child labour monitoring: A crucial tool in effective abolition

214. CLM is a major, relatively new, area of work, which is attracting considerable interest among international donors, consumers and ILO constituents alike. CLM enables an overall, rather than a project-specific, assessment to be made of the extent to which action against child labour is having a positive impact. There are three main subcategories of CLM:

- *Workplace monitoring* to determine whether children are present, whether their work is hazardous or not (and what minimum ages should be respected), their conditions of work and possible improvements in their situation (e.g. removal of children from the workplace, removal of hazards, reduction in working hours, provision of protective equipment or removal of other bad practices). Such monitoring is most often done by labour inspectors, employers through self-monitoring, trade unions, independent monitors or NGOs.

Box 1.2

Recommendations made by children consulted during the planning of the Time-Bound Programme in the United Republic of Tanzania

Key stakeholder	Recommendations of children on what each stakeholder should do
Children	• Be informed about the effects of city life, the worst forms of child labour and dropping out of school. • Participate in forums on child rights and child labour at the family and village levels. • Be involved in planning and designing programmes within their communities to eliminate child labour.
Parents	• Know more about children's rights and gender issues. • Provide children with their basic needs such as love, education, health and protection. • Not have more children and not get divorced.
Religious organizations	• Continue to provide moral guidance and counselling.
Journalists	• Address child labour and provide information on services to those affected. • Write about child labour experiences, not just about beauty contests and sex.
NGOs	• Provide counselling to children withdrawn from child labour. • Promote child rights, alleviate household poverty, withdraw children from child labour and rehabilitate them.
Government	• Ensure that all children have access to an education that is relevant. • Punish those who exploit children's labour.
IPEC (and the donor community in general)	• Work with the government to ensure that Convention No. 182 is implemented. • Where possible, assist with payment of school fees. • Assist in the campaign against HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. • Increase the number of vocational training and counselling centres. • Draw up a policy to abolish the worst forms of child labour.

Source: IPEC: *Project document: Supporting the Time-Bound Programme on the worst forms of child labour in the United Republic of Tanzania* (Geneva, ILO, 2001), p. 10, box 3.

- *Social protection monitoring* to determine what support services former or current child labourers receive (such as formal or non-formal education, vocational training, health care, counselling or other rehabilitation services, and income generation assistance/microfinance services for their families) and the impact of this support. Social protection monitoring can be undertaken by the community, NGOs, children, parents and families, teachers or various local government welfare or other agencies.
- *Monitoring by communities* to determine whether children working in the home, in traditional subsistence agriculture, fishing or other family-based occupations and in the informal economy receive decent treatment

and are engaged in activities that are appropriate to their age and that do not interfere with their education and development.

215. A new IPEC project aims to develop and test materials and build capacity in government labour inspectorates and in employers' and workers' organizations to undertake and sustain comprehensive child labour monitoring or verification, covering not only the formal sector but the informal and rural sectors as well. These systems will have a twofold aim: to verify that children are withdrawn from child labour, especially from its worst forms, and to ensure that the situation of these children, once withdrawn, really is better than before.

Strengthening research capacity

Capacity building is key

216. In order to meet these many pressing information needs, research capacity at all levels, from national government to communities, must be strengthened. There should be an exchange of knowledge between national, regional and international agencies. Research results and methods must be properly documented and evaluated, and user-friendly training materials developed. The different agencies involved in collecting data about children need to be better coordinated, so that the information they gather can be compared, pooled and used to greatest effect.

217. The best way of learning is often through practical experience. For example, labour inspectors in **Indonesia**, the **Philippines**, the **United Republic of Tanzania** and **Turkey** have been trained through participation in field research.[5] The IPEC time-bound programmes include capacity building of national institutions in:

— training in interview techniques for difficult topics;
— interviewing children;
— data processing and development of databases;
— special techniques for researching illegal activities and hazardous work;
— addressing gender issues in surveys and analyses;
— strategies for integrating child labour surveys into routine national data collection;
— harmonizing age groups in different data sets to improve comparability and ensuring the inclusion of young children in surveys;
— monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment techniques.

Research is a sound investment

218. Solid research, monitoring and evaluation, undertaken through partnerships of different stakeholders, are essential if interventions to combat child labour are to be tailored to children's, families' and communities' needs and circumstances. Thus, although research may sometimes appear to be an additional cost to an already over-stretched budget, experience shows it to be a sound investment as it increases the effectiveness of interventions.

---

[5] IPEC: *Good practices in action against child labour: A synthesis report of seven country studies, 1997-98 by independent researchers: Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Philippines, the United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey* (Geneva, ILO, 2001), p. 27.

2. International action to support national partners

219. Child labour is part of a wider social reality at local, national and international levels. Only through understanding and action at all these levels, in mutually reinforcing ways, can its effective abolition be achieved. This chapter examines some of the most important developments at the international level that are helping to build an environment in which child labour can be abolished in the national contexts in which it occurs.

The framework for action by the ILO

International labour standards and technical cooperation: Complementary approaches

220. The international labour standards of the ILO, reinforced by the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, provide the Organization with the framework for action to combat child labour.

Most countries have minimum age legislation

221. Promoting child labour standards and supervising their application in those countries that had ratified the relevant Conventions was, for many years, the predominant ILO approach to the problem. Reflecting this work, the legislation of most countries now prohibits certain types of work for persons not having attained a minimum age. Country reports submitted under ILO supervisory procedures in the case of ratification of the relevant Conventions contain ample information in this regard.[6] Information with regard to countries

---

[6] These reports are reviewed in an annual report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, which is examined by a committee of the International Labour Conference. See, for example, *Report of the Committee of Experts*, 89th Session, Geneva, 2001. The legislation itself may be included in the ILO database, NATLEX (http://natlex.ilo.org/).

that have not ratified the fundamental Conventions can be found in reports submitted annually under the follow-up to the Declaration.[7]

222. With the advent of an approach to child labour in the late 1980s based on technical cooperation, some people were afraid that action for the application of minimum age standards might somehow be weakened and that ILO work in this area would become less effective.

Normative work and technical cooperation are mutually reinforcing

223. This has not been the case. There has been, over the course of the 1990s, a dramatically increasing readiness on the part of governments to acknowledge that a child labour problem exists and to undertake positive action to combat it, often with the support of IPEC. The feared spectre of negative reactions from trading partners, consumers, trade unions and others has receded in the light of the realization that, in reality, a willingness by individual countries to address child labour is perceived very positively by the global community at large. Far from slowing down, ratifications of Convention No. 138 (and now Convention No. 182) have accelerated. Experience with child labour therefore confirms that there is no inherent conflict between technical cooperation and normative action – the two approaches are complementary.

The abolition of child labour within overall development policy

224. International labour standards show the importance of the abolition of child labour in countries' overall development strategies and offer guidance on the elements of a comprehensive policy to achieve this. The Minimum Age Recommendation, 1973 (No. 146), that accompanies Convention No. 138 envisages development as an inclusive, gradual process requiring the "progressive extension of the inter-related measures necessary" such as "firm national commitment to full employment, ... the progressive extension of other economic and social measures to alleviate poverty wherever it exists and to ensure family living standards and income which are such as to make it unnecessary to have recourse to the economic activity of children, ... the development and progressive extension of adequate facilities for education and vocational orientation and training ..." (Paragraphs 1 and 2). Building on this, the ILO takes an approach that is as comprehensive as possible in its tech-nical assistance strategy for the elimination of child labour.

225. The campaign for universal ratification of Convention No. 182 has given the general fight against child labour a new urgency and scope, by focusing world attention on its worst forms. Its implementation will contribute to the abolition of all forms of child labour – the Declaration's third category of principles and rights – and indeed to respect for all the fundamental principles.

The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC): A decade of experience

The fundamental principles are indivisible

226. IPEC was launched as a major ILO technical cooperation programme on child labour in 1992, building on an earlier interdepartmental project. Before this, systematic project work to eliminate child labour barely existed at the global level. Reform of national policies and legislation had been proceeding slowly and, despite enormous efforts on the part of many different actors, there was little coherence, much duplication and many valuable experiences were not shared.

---

[7] Country reports under the follow-up to the Declaration are published in full each March as a Governing Body document in the *Review of annual reports under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Part II. Compilation of annual reports by the International Labour Office*, e.g. GB.277/3/2, GB.280/3/2 and GB.283/3/2, preceded by *Part I. Introduction by the ILO Declaration Expert-Advisers to the compilation of annual reports* (e.g. GB.277/3/1, GB.280/3/1 and GB.283/3/1). These are also available on the ILO web site (www.ilo.org/declaration).

Growth of IPEC

227. Since then, the situation has much improved and IPEC has expanded exponentially. In its early days, IPEC worked in six countries with financial support from a single donor government, **Germany**.[8] By December 2001, it was operational in 75 countries, had 26 donors (countries and organizations) and managed a portfolio of active and planned projects in excess of US$200 million. Annual expenditure on technical cooperation projects reached over US$33 million in 2001. The number and range of IPEC's partners have also expanded over the years, and now include government agencies, employers' and workers' organizations, private businesses, community-based organizations, NGOs, the media, parliamentarians, the judiciary, religious groups and, of course, children and their families. Almost 150 NGOs across the world have been working with IPEC through action programmes. It is, by a long stretch, the biggest single operational programme of the ILO.

Comprehensive support to member States

228. IPEC's approach to the elimination of child labour has evolved over the past ten years as a result of the experience it has gained and the changing needs of its partners for assistance. The programme now incorporates the different categories of ILO work against child labour, including research and statistics, technical cooperation, advisory services and advocacy, as well as its own unit for monitoring and evaluation, therefore providing member States with comprehensive support to combat child labour.

From country programmes to time-bound programmes

The country programme approach

229. IPEC has supported governments and partner organizations to develop and implement innovative and experimental activities since its inception. Once a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the government and the ILO, a phased approach to action is followed, including determining the nature and extent of child labour, devising national policies and protective legislation, setting up mechanisms to provide in-country ownership and operation of national programmes of action (under the guidance of a national steering committee involving ILO constituents and other agencies concerned), and creating awareness in communities and workplaces.

230. This country programme approach has been instrumental in mobilizing broad support for the fight against child labour and enhancing capacity in national institutions. But its effectiveness in making a large-scale impact on child labour has often been hampered by the small size and scope of the individual action programmes scattered across the national territory and frequently subcontracted out to local implementing agencies, which themselves suffer from capacity constraints.

More comprehensive projects

231. Since 1997, IPEC projects have increased in scope, tending to cover larger geographical areas or whole economic sectors, through comprehensive programmes with correspondingly higher budgets. Work has progressed on development of new approaches to workplace monitoring and to social protection, in its broadest sense, for child labourers and their families. These programmes have resulted in the direct withdrawal of many thousands of children from work, while endeavouring to keep workplaces free of child labour and ensuring that former child labourers and their families are provided with viable alternative livelihoods.[9]

---

[8] IPEC was established with a voluntary contribution of DM50,000,000 from the Government of Germany.

[9] For information on IPEC activities in recent years, see, for example, IPEC: *Action against child labour: Lessons and strategic priorities for the future* (Geneva, ILO, 1997); IPEC: *IPEC action against child labour: Achievements, lessons learned and indications for the future (1998-99)* (Geneva, ILO, 1999); IPEC: *IPEC Highlights 2000* (Geneva, ILO, 2000); *IPEC action against child labour 2000-01: Progress and future priorities* (Geneva, ILO, 2001).

232. Experience is also accumulating with comprehensive projects aimed at combating child labour on a national or regional scale. Such projects have multiple components, including child labour surveys and awareness raising alongside the three central pillars of the IPEC approach – prevention of child labour, the withdrawal of children from child labour and their rehabilitation. Several major cross-border regional projects have recently been launched to address trafficking in children (the Greater Mekong subregion), child domestic workers (Central America), small-scale mining (Latin America), commercial sexual exploitation (Latin America), commercial agriculture (East Africa) and horticulture (Latin America). A comprehensive state-based approach to the elimination of child labour is under way in Andhra Pradesh, **India**, and this aims to generate a replicable model for other Indian states to take up.

Time-bound programmes

233. Thus, the essentially experimental approaches tried and tested by IPEC through the 1990s are increasingly being brought to scale through larger, integrated programmes. The latest step in this evolution is the time-bound programme (TBP), which has been developed in response to requests from ILO member States for assistance in putting into practice the provisions of Convention No. 182 (see box 2.1 and figure 6).

Child labour in other ILO programmes

234. Child labour is increasingly being taken up as an issue in other ILO programmes that have the expertise to bring to bear on the problem. These include, for example, the InFocus Programmes on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development, Crisis Response and Reconstruction, Safety and Health at Work and the Environment and Skills, Knowledge and Employability, the ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work and the Gender Promotion Programme. The ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities and the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities conduct and support activities against child labour by the ILO social partners.

235. The ILO Declaration provides a framework under which child labour can be addressed as part of broader initiatives that encompass all four fundamental principles and rights at work. In **Bolivia**, for example, a project focusing on the cashew nut sector in the Department of Beni includes the elimination of child labour and discrimination against women as cross-cutting themes. With the involvement of IPEC, the project aims to strengthen the bargaining power of the workers involved in this sector with a view to improving their conditions of work. A slightly different approach has been taken in **Benin**, **Burkina Faso**, **Niger** and **Togo**, where projects undertaken under the InFocus Programme on Promoting the Declaration have begun by conducting national studies to identify the obstacles that these countries face in giving full effect to all four categories of fundamental principles and rights at work. This places the analysis of child labour in relation to a broader context, thereby also encouraging interministerial cooperation at the national level.

Mainstreaming child labour in poverty reduction strategies

236. This Report has shown clearly how poverty and social exclusion produce fertile breeding grounds for child labour. Unfortunately, neither economic reforms nor conventional development models have yielded the promised outcomes for large sections of the population in the developing world. The average income today in the richest 20 countries is 37 times that in the poorest 20 – a gap that has doubled in the past 40 years.[10]

---

[10] World Bank: *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking poverty* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 3.

Box 2.1

The time-bound programme concept

Time-bound programmes (TBP) aim to eradicate the worst forms of child labour within a determined period of time, and to demonstrate the positive impact this can have on a country's social and economic development and, indeed, on the progressive abolition of all forms of child labour. The TBP concept combines sectoral, thematic and area-based approaches, linking action against child labour into national development strategies, particularly those addressing poverty reduction, education and employment promotion. Withdrawal of children from the worst forms of child labour is accompanied by provision of appropriate rehabilitation and education for the children, and income and employment alternatives for their families, as well as measures to prevent other children from being drawn in to replace them. Country ownership is key to the TBP concept. Official commitment at the highest level sets the programme development in motion, creates the structures through which it will be implemented and allocates resources to it. IPEC, with the support of donors, backs this commitment with additional resources and technical assistance.

Integral to the TBP is the development of a monitoring and evaluation system, including targets and indicators, for assessing the impact, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the programme. Three countries – El Salvador, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania – are in the "first wave" of TBP, made possible by funding from the Government of the United States. Project documents were elaborated in the course of 2001 through a process of close consultation with the full range of national stakeholders, including child labourers. Research was carried out to build a better understanding of the worst forms of child labour to be targeted. The goals are ambitious – the numbers of children who are already working or at risk of working in specified worst forms of child labour are: 26,000 in El Salvador, 33,000 in Nepal and 30,000 in the United Republic of Tanzania.[1] Programme strategies can be grouped into those to create an enabling environment for elimination of the targeted worst forms, and those involving direct action. Gender issues, i.e. the different situations, problems and solutions for boys and girls, are taken fully into account in project design. Programme implementation was scheduled to start in early 2002.

It is very early days for this new approach. The next Global Report on the abolition of child labour in 2006 will provide an opportunity to review the extent to which the high expectations on all sides are being met, what problems have been encountered and how they were resolved. Another key issue is sustainability – the extent to which national stakeholders have themselves been able to mainstream activities into their own regular budgets and programmes.

[1] The worst forms of child labour covered include: for El Salvador, children in prostitution, children working in garbage tips, in fishing and on sugar-cane plantations; for Nepal, bonded labourers, rag-pickers, porters, domestic workers, carpet weavers, children in mining and trafficked children; for the United Republic of Tanzania, children in prostitution, mining, domestic work and commercial agriculture.

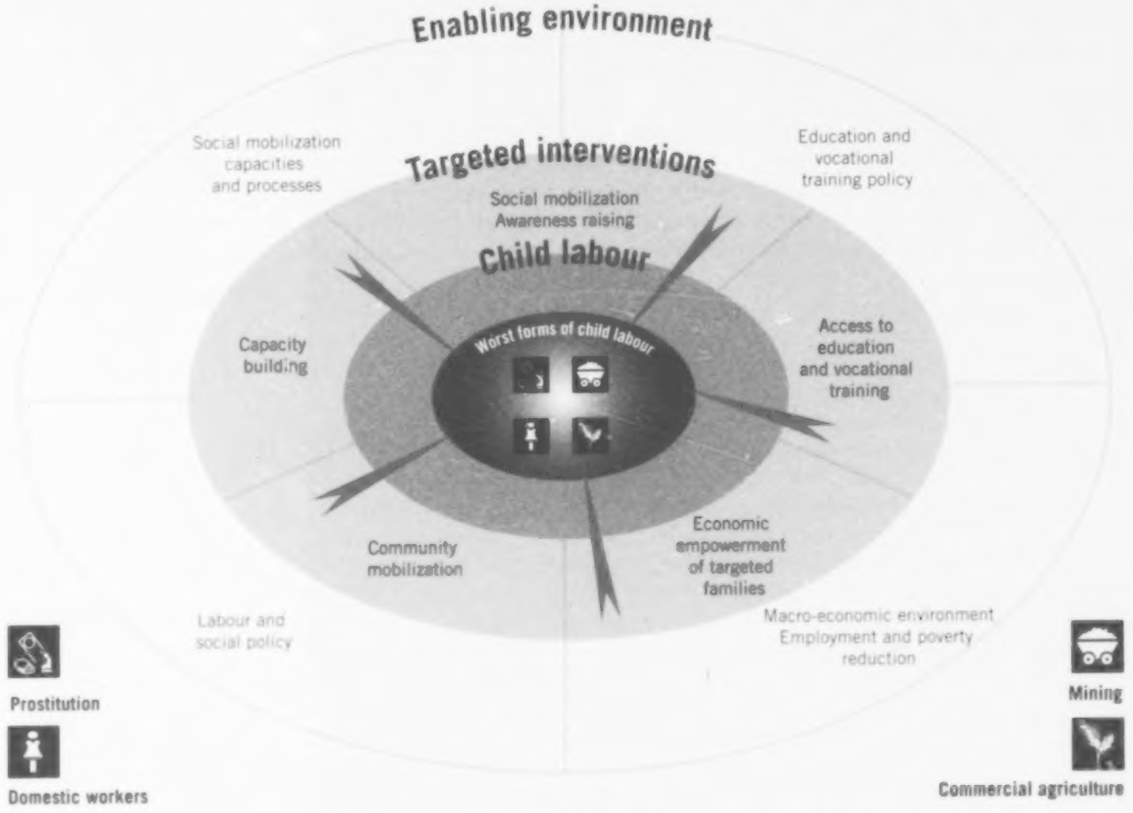
Commitment on poverty

237. But a worldwide commitment now exists to attack poverty. The United Nations Millennium Summit, held in New York in September 2000, put in place the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).[11] Progress towards achievement of each one of these goals, and, in particular, the goals to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty

---

[11] The MDGs are: (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) Achieve universal primary education; (3) Promote gender equality and empower women; (4) Reduce child mortality; (5) Improve maternal health; (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) Ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) Develop a global partnership for development.

Figure 6. The Time-Bound Programme in the United Republic of Tanzania


Enabling environment
Social mobilization capacities and processes
Education and vocational training policy
Targeted interventions
Social mobilization Awareness raising
Child labour
Worst forms of child labour
Capacity building
Access to education and vocational training
Community mobilization
Economic empowerment of targeted families
Labour and social policy
Macro-economic environment Employment and poverty reduction
Prostitution
Domestic workers
Mining
Commercial agriculture

Source: IPEC: *Project document: Supporting the Time-Bound Programme on the worst forms of child labour in the United Republic of Tanzania* (Geneva, ILO, 2001).

and to ensure universal primary education by 2015, will provide a backdrop against which the effective abolition of child labour can itself be realized.

PRSPs: A vehicle for the abolition of child labour

238. Poverty reduction on the massive scale required is an unprecedented challenge to the global community. In September 1999, the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) determined that nationally owned, poverty reduction strategies should provide the basis for all their concessional lending and for debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) are now being developed by country authorities for submission to the Boards of directors of the World Bank and the IMF. To date, more than 40 countries have prepared either Interim PRSPs (I-PRSPs) or full PRSPs (see box 2.2).

Fast-acting measures essential

239. Recognizing the brevity of childhood, the World Bank suggests that policies on child labour should include "faster-acting measures" than those customarily adopted in poverty reduction programmes.[12] It is also critical that support be provided for poor people to manage risk and shock, as this reduces their vulnerability and allows them to take advantage of higher-risk, higher-return economic opportunities.[13]

---

[12] P. Fallon and Z. Tzannatos: *Child labour: Issues and directions for the World Bank*, op. cit., p. v.

[13] World Bank: *World Development Report 2000/2001*, op. cit., pp. 6-10 and 15.

Box 2.2

Poverty reduction strategy papers and child labour

There are six core principles underlying the development and implementation of poverty reduction strategies. The strategies should be:

- **country-driven**, involving broad-based participation by civil society and the private sector in all operational steps;
- **results-oriented**, and focused on outcomes that would benefit the poor;
- **comprehensive** in recognizing the multidimensional nature of poverty; but also
- **prioritized** so that implementation is feasible, in both fiscal and institutional terms;
- **partnership-oriented**, involving coordinated participation of development partners (bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental);
- based on a **long-term perspective** for poverty reduction.

The PRSP process offers great potential for decent work, and with it the abolition of child labour, to be mainstreamed within national social and economic policy in low-income countries. To this end, the ILO, in consultation with its constituents and the World Bank, has selected five countries (Cambodia, Honduras, Mali, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania) as special focus countries in which ILO engagement will be carefully supported and monitored to demonstrate the contribution of the Decent Work Agenda to national poverty reduction.

An initial examination of the currently available PRSPs and I-PRSPs reveals that coverage of child labour is weak. The main focus on children is in connection with education and health policy and programmes; however, child labour is mentioned relatively infrequently as a specific area of concern.

The I-PRSP developed by the Government of Gambia, for example, considers the situation of children in its analysis of poverty, indicating that over half the country's children live in poverty, mostly in rural areas. Child labour is widespread, especially among extremely poor households, and involves more girls than boys. While children are recognized as a target group of the strategy for poverty alleviation, specific targets relate only to health and education, with no mention of child labour.

The PRSP of Honduras is an example of a more comprehensive approach to children in both the diagnosis of poverty and in the responses envisaged. It indicates the increasing labour force participation of children in the wake of Hurricane Mitch, with children (aged between 10 and 14) working, on average, 33 hours per week, mostly in unpaid family labour. It goes on to describe a range of integrated policies and programmes to address the rights and needs of different "at risk" population groups, including overall support for children's rights, the gradual and progressive eradication of child labour and the protection of working adolescents.

An initiative in IPEC aims to support the integration of child labour in national poverty elimination strategies. In the context of preparation of the Time-Bound Programmes in Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania, explicit efforts have been made to promote the inclusion of child labour in the design and implementation of PRSPs.

Source: www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/index.htm

Child labour in the UNDAF

240. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) provides another vehicle through which the ILO and its partners seek to ensure that child labour is firmly on the development agenda. The presence of an ILO office in the country, and therefore of IPEC, clearly facilitates constructive engagement in country-based development planning. For example, the UNDAF is currently being updated for **Zimbabwe**. The ILO, through its re-

gional Multidisciplinary Advisory Team for Southern Africa (ILO/SAMAT), based in Harare, is represented in the steering committee for this process. ILO/SAMAT is participating actively in different aspects of the process, with the result that the recently completed Common Country Assessment (CCA) devotes a section to the worst forms of child labour; activities and responsible agencies for the issues identified will be included in the revised UNDAF. The United Nations Country Team Thematic Group on Human Rights and Governance is active in child labour and children's rights issues.

International action for children's rights

United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children

241. Awareness of children's rights and commitment to their implementation grew during the 1990s, in parallel with the swelling concern for poverty reduction. The World Summit for Children in 1990 resulted in the development of national plans of action targeting nine out of ten of the world's children. Many of the Summit's goals, particularly those on health, education and gender equality, prefigured the Millennium Development Goals. For the follow-up United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children in May 2002, the ILO, with the support of the social partners, is seeking to ensure that the outcome document clearly reflects the global commitment to the elimination of *all* child labour, with the use of the minimum age for employment or work as the yardstick.

Important new human rights instruments come into force

242. In May 2000, two optional protocols to the CRC were adopted.[14] The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography entered into force on 18 January 2002. It emphasizes the need "to strengthen international cooperation by multilateral, regional and bilateral arrangements for the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible for acts involving the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, and child sex tourism".

243.The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict entered into force on 12 February 2002. It requires ratifying States to "take all feasible measures to ensure that members of their armed forces who have not attained the age of 18 years do not take a direct part in hostilities" and establishes a ban on compulsory recruitment below 18 years. It calls upon ratifying States "to cooperate in the implementation of the present Protocol, ... including through technical cooperation and financial assistance" for rehabilitation and social reintegration of former child soldiers.

Interagency cooperation

244. Cooperation between the various international organizations concerned with children, poverty and development has intensified in recent years. The structural causes of child labour, such as poverty, inequality, and deficient education, health and child protection systems, fall within the mandates of different agencies. Thus, the core mandate of the ILO in this field is complemented by those of UNICEF, the World Bank, WHO, UNDP, UNESCO and others, each of which has expertise and programme experience to bring to bear on solving the problem.

International agencies working together

245. By working together, synergies between agencies can be exploited. The ILO and UNICEF drew up an agreement in 1996 to strengthen existing cooperation, confirming the complementary and mutually supportive roles of

---

[14] The texts of the protocols can be accessed at www.unicef.org/crc/oppro.htm

the two agencies in the progressive elimination of child labour and protection of working children. This agreement provides a framework for cooperative action to ensure coherent positions on policy and practice in child labour, to convene joint regional and subregional workshops on research for purposes of disseminating and exchanging experiences and to continue with technical cooperation and follow-up activities. In operational terms, the ILO and UNICEF implement joint programmes in **Bangladesh**, **Brazil**, **Nepal**, **Pakistan**, the **United Republic of Tanzania**, and collaborate in many other countries.

246. Developing New Strategies for Understanding Children's Work and Its Impact is an important new interagency project coordinated from the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy. Launched in December 2000, this joint initiative of the ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank aims to improve child labour research, data collection and analysis, to enhance local and national capacity for research and to improve the evaluation of interventions. It is assessing existing information so as to identify major gaps and ways of filling them. Indicators are being developed to chart the dimensions of child labour and to relate them to income, gender, health condition and education.

247. Another example is the cooperation between the ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO and Education International in a project to mobilize teachers, educators and their organizations to combat child labour. This collaboration produced two outputs: an information kit for teachers, and a report,[15] which assembled country experiences and assessed the extent to which education systems respond to the challenge of child labour, the obstacles faced and successful strategies to overcome them.

248. The ILO collaborates closely with United Nations organizations concerned with human rights and children's rights, such as the Commission on Human Rights, the Working Group on Slavery of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the CRC. The CRC has expressed its intention to reinforce its cooperation with the ILO on child labour, especially with respect to the trafficking of children.

International action on education

Slow progress in education for all

249. The call for universal, free and compulsory basic education is a central pillar in both poverty reduction and children's rights goals. But despite many countries' efforts to promote universal primary education and especially access for girls, progress has been disappointingly slow.[16] Current trends in enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Arab States, which are home to 95 per cent of out-of-school children, give profound cause for concern. All States were enjoined, at the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000, to develop or strengthen national plans of action by 2002 at the latest and to integrate these into a wider development framework to address the chronic under-financing of basic education. Bilateral and multilateral funding agencies were urged to mobilize new financial resources, preferably in the forms of grants and concessional assistance. Countries qualifying under the World Bank's HIPC Initiative are now expected to increase expenditure on education with the funds at their disposal.

---

[15] N. Haspels et al.: *Action against child labour: Strategies in education* (Geneva, ILO, 1999).

[16] World Education Forum 2000: *Final Report* (Dakar, Senegal, 2000).

Greater efforts needed

250. The first meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All, in October 2001, reasserted that "no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources", and called for greater coordination of efforts, partnerships with civil society and increased and more efficient funding of basic education. Only through this, supported by a more concerted campaign at the global level, can the target of universal primary education by 2015, which is so critical to the abolition of child labour, be met.

International action on youth employment

MDG on youth employment

251. The international community has recently recognized the challenge of creating employment for the world's 1.2 billion young men and women who will enter the working-age population during the next decade. This is reflected in the Millennium Development Goal to develop "strategies for decent and productive work for youth". The ILO has the lead role in helping to achieve the employment goals set by the World Summit for Social Development in 1995.

252. Promoting productive employment for youth is closely linked to the abolition of child labour in two main ways. First, the general prospect of future unemployment or underemployment discourages children and their parents from investing in education and skills training, thus helping to perpetuate child labour among younger children. Second, the lack of decent work opportunities for young people leaving school and entering the labour market for the first time means they may fall prey to unprotected, hazardous work, thus themselves becoming child labourers.

A high-level policy network

253. To address the challenge, the United Nations Secretary-General, with the support of the ILO and the World Bank, has convened a High-Level Policy Network on Youth Employment. A high-level panel met for the first time in July 2001. Its recommendations included forming a global alliance for youth employment, with particular attention to a youth employment dimension integrated into comprehensive employment strategies, institutional support for youth employment policies, investment in education and training, bridging the gap between the informal and the mainstream economies, and ensuring a social floor for young people by improving their working conditions, promoting their rights and recognizing their voice and representation at work. The ILO is taking a lead role in the follow-up, through its InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability.

Action by the social partners

254. The social partners are also responding to the challenge. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), has established a Global Youth Programme.[17] The Employers' group, following on from a survey conducted by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), proposed a resolution on youth employment to the 86th Session of the International Labour Conference in 1998, where it was adopted with unanimous support.[18] The ILO has recently produced a report: *Meeting the youth employment challenge: A guide for employers*, a collaborative effort between the InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability and the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities.[19] This is designed to help employers and their organizations to initiate and expand action to promote productive employment for youth.

---

[17] See Child labour at www.icftu.org

[18] See www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc86/com-res.htm

[19] ILO: *Meeting the youth employment challenge: A guide for employers* (Geneva, 2001).

International action to combat transnational problems

255. Types of child labour that involve cross-border activities demand coordinated action at the international level. Tourism for the commercial sexual exploitation of children is a case in point. In this field, a number of promising initiatives have been taken, including the establishment of a broad-based Task Force to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Tourism, and its online service, the Child Prostitution and Tourism Watch, involving employers' and workers' organizations. Bilateral agreements between source and destination countries of "sex tourists" can allow for exchange of information, harmonization of laws and judicial procedures, police cooperation and the ensured safety and welfare of child witnesses. For example, two such agreements have been concluded between the Government of the **Philippines** and the Governments of **Australia** and the **United Kingdom**.

256. The need for such international collaboration in the context of the commercial sexual exploitation of children was recognized in the Yokohama Global Commitment 2001, which emphasized the importance of close networking among key actors at the international, interregional, regional/subregional, bilateral, national and local levels.[20]

Countries acting together against trafficking

257. Significant international action is also being taken to combat trafficking of children, for example in the Greater Mekong subregion, South Asia and West and Central Africa. A bilateral agreement concluded between **Côte d'Ivoire** and **Mali** to fight cross-border trafficking, provides for joint preparation of national plans of action for prevention, control, repatriation and rehabilitation.

A new impetus

258. The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted on 15 November 2000, gives new impetus to international efforts to reduce trafficking in children for purposes of their labour.

Regional cooperation against child labour

Regional cooperation strengthens national action

259. Cooperation to combat child labour also happens more generally at the regional level. The Subregional Plan for the Eradication of Child Labour was launched by the ILO and MERCOSUR[21] in December 2001. Each MERCOSUR member country has established a National Commission for the Eradication of Child Labour and an action plan. The three-year MERCOSUR Plan, in which **Chile** is also participating, includes the following:

— generation of statistics on child labour (with SIMPOC support);
— improvement of labour inspection;
— linkages between social safety nets and the trade union movement;
— adaptation and application of legislation to give effect to Convention Nos.138 and 182;
— promotion of social programmes to keep children in school;
— development of programmes on the worst forms of child labour, with emphasis on commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work and manufacturing.

---

[20] The 2nd World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, see www.focalpointngo.org/yokohama/default.htm

[21] MERCOSUR is an agreement promoting deeper economic integration between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay; a social-labour declaration supplements the main accords.

260. Another example of regional cooperation is the work of the Southern African Development Community (SADC),[22] led by its Employment and Labour Sector, to promote coordinated action among its member States and the social partners to combat child labour.

---

[22] SADC member States are Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

3. National governments in the front line

261. National political commitment is the key to the effective abolition of child labour. In the absence of firm policy commitment by the government, backed up by resources and translated into effective action, the best efforts of other partners in the fight against child labour are likely to result in making little more than a small dent in the problem.

Governments must create the enabling environment

262. The obligation to establish, implement and monitor policies and legislation, and to translate international commitments into domestic action, rests firmly with governments. Inclusive, accountable systems of governance and sound macroeconomic management provide the foundations on which effective, well-resourced policies and programmes to combat child labour can be built and sustained.

263. This chapter outlines some of the core responsibilities of governments that will help to create a conducive enabling environment in which direct interventions (reviewed in Chapter 4 of Part II) for prevention of child labour and withdrawal of children from child labour will have the most effect.

The policy framework for the abolition of child labour

Many countries have child labour policies

264. Many countries have established distinct child labour policies, programmes or plans of action. For example, of the 36 governments addressing this issue under the 2002 follow-up to the Declaration, 75 per cent (27 countries) indicated that a national policy or plan aimed at ensuring the effective abolition of child labour was in place.[23] The focus of these policies differs from country to country (see box 3.1 for **Mali** and box 3.2 for the **United States**).

265. Commercial sexual exploitation of children has moved developing, transition and developed countries alike to take action. In its annual report under

---

[23] The countries are Australia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Cambodia, China, Comoros, Cuba, Czech Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mali, Mexico, the Republic of Moldova, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand.

Box 3.1

Mali: Legislative and policy reform upon ratification of the fundamental Conventions

With the ratification of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), Mali has amended its Criminal Code and Penal Code to include more repressive measures to deal with trafficking in children for labour exploitation.

New instruments are being drawn up to address the reorganization of the Employment Directorate services, to equip them to deal with the issues of surveillance and control of child labour. A national programme has the following objectives: conduct surveys and research on the living and working conditions of working children, undertake action programmes which address the priority needs of vulnerable families and communities, withdraw children from the worst forms of labour and consider how to reintegrate them socially and economically, orga-nize awareness-raising, information and education campaigns to promote and extend action, strengthen the institutional capacity of the implementation structures to maximize the impact of action programmes, provide decision-makers with quantitative and qualitative information to facilitate action plans to combat child labour.

The action programmes have all adopted a partnership approach, which has made it possible to prevent children from working or to release children from the harshest and most dangerous forms of exploitation. This was achieved by offering viable alternatives in education as well as providing other support services such as awareness raising among children, their parents or guardians, employers, people in positions of responsibility and the trade unions. All of this work has been carried out through associations of working children, which were esta-blished and currently operate with the support of IPEC.

Source: ILO: *Review of annual reports under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Part II* (Geneva, 2002), pp. 410-418.

the follow-up to the Declaration, the **Czech Republic** notes that a national plan includes a set of long-term measures aimed at eliminating child trafficking, prostitution, abuse and pornography.

266. The Government of **Ghana**'s national programme focuses on children in prostitution, street children, domestic workers, porters and children working in small-scale mines, with priority given to girls, children working in very hazardous conditions and children under 12 years old. The youth programme adopted by the Government of **Kazakhstan** aims to create legal, economic and organizational machinery for the implementation of a policy to safeguard the rights of youth in work, education and health. The Government of **Mexico** established a special council to promote the development of children and adolescents through implementing an agenda which guides action by government and society in favour of children.

Vulnerable groups are targeted

267. Of the 38 countries under the 2002 review of annual reports that mentioned specific measures or programmes of action to combat child labour, 20 countries gave special attention to the needs of particular groups of children: disabled children (e.g. **Australia**, **Canada**, **Cuba**, **Kazakhstan**, **Syrian Arab Republic**); street children (e.g. **Ethiopia**, **Mexico**); children performing hazardous work (e.g. **Lebanon**, **Pakistan**); girl children (e.g. **India**); children with disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. **Belgium**, **Russian Federation**); orphaned/abandoned children (e.g. **Kazakhstan**, **Russian Federation**, **Syrian Arab Republic**); children in rural areas (e.g. **Canada**, **Mali**, **Thailand**); and children working in the informal sector (e.g. **Mali**, **Mexico**).

Box 3.2

United States: National Program of Action against child labour

Having ratified Convention No. 182, the United States Government put in place a National Program of Action directed at addressing the four principal issues that are regarded as most urgent and compelling:

— preventing the criminal exploitation of children;
— reducing workplace injuries and fatalities to young workers;
— assuring that too much work does not adversely affect educational achievement and completion;
— assuring that there is adequate information to make informed, appropriate decisions about the issues arising from youth employment.

The National Program of Action is designed as a living document [illegible]nitor programmes, identify new initiatives, and highlight areas in need of improvement. It identifies federal initiatives and federal/state partnerships that enforce laws and implement programmes in each of the above problem areas, and contains specific recommendations to carry their work forward. Progress in implementing the plan of action is monitored by the United States Department of Labor, and carefully considered by other relevant agencies at the federal and state levels.

Source: United States Government: *Child labor: National Program of Action* (Jan. 2001).

268. At the same time as maintaining a specific policy on child labour, each government must mainstream the issue within overall policy frameworks in, for example, employment, poverty reduction, education and vocational training, labour and social protection. Such mainstreaming has been a feature in, for instance, **Colombia**, **Kenya**, **Mexico**, the **United Republic of Tanzania** and **Thailand**.

269. For its part, the Government of **Jamaica**[24] acknowledges that strategies for poverty eradication must address the problem of child labour within a child-focused framework. These strategies must:

— be a part of public policies for children, developed jointly by government and civil society;
— see the child in his/her social context, including the family;
— promote gender awareness;
— improve the income levels of poor families through targeted policies to ensure children's access to and completion of primary school.

Institutional arrangements to support the abolition of child labour

Integrated approach to children's issues

270. The need for an integrated approach to children's issues, involving the many different parts of government that have a role to play, is frequently acknowledged but less frequently found in the structures of governance. A child-focused approach helps to bring about an integrated framework for action, as reflected in "children's policies" that create an improved basis for different ministries to focus together on meeting the various development needs

---

[24] ILO: *Review of annual reports under the Declaration, Part II* (Geneva, 2002) p. 301.

and rights of children.[25] This approach has been successfully adopted in **Colombia, Kenya, Mexico** and the **Philippines.**

Institutional structures to address child labour

271. Child labour policy often directs that a formal structure be created with a mandate to oversee the work on this issue. The combination of IPEC action and the provisions of the CRC have resulted, in many countries, in the establishment of national steering committees, national commissions for child labour or child labour units to coordinate action, instigate consultations and create a critical mass of knowledge and expertise at the national level. Child labour units have been set up, with IPEC support, in **Egypt**, **Turkey**, **Kenya** and the **United Republic of Tanzania**.

272. Other than the Ministry of Labour, ministries with a stake in fighting child labour may include those responsible for national development, economic policy, finance, rural and industrial development, public health, social welfare and protection, women's issues, education and law enforcement. The child labour unit may act as the secretariat to a high-level institution that brings together this wider group of actors, sometimes charged with articulating and monitoring child labour policy. High-level committees consisting of representatives of government, employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs and academics have been set up in **Argentina**, **Colombia**, **Kenya**, **Nicaragua**, **Portugal** and **Thailand**, among other countries.

273. In **Colombia**, for example, the National Commission for the Elimination of Child Labour, active since 1995, monitors the country's national policy across a wide range of economic sectors and government institutions. It extends to the work of the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare, and NGOs working with it, to provide psychological counselling, training and income-earning opportunities. Action by trade unions complements the national plan by urging employers not to take on anyone under the age of 15. As a result of this work, Colombia has seen a reduction in child labour in several sectors.

The legal framework

Most ILO member States have set a general minimum age

274. Establishment of a legal framework for the abolition of child labour, along with mechanisms for its enforcement, is a responsibility that many governments have taken up. The vast majority of ILO member States have enacted legislation to set a basic minimum age for admission to employment, and to address other aspects of the employment of under 18-year-olds. Even in the absence of ratification, ILO Conventions still have an influence on national legislation.[26] A coherent, national normative framework provides a stable point of reference for the various policy actors responsible for different aspects of children's rights. It also provides the basis on which violators of these rights can be held accountable (see box 3.3).

Improving national legal frameworks

275. While considerable progress has been made in establishing coherent national legal frameworks, inadequacies remain in many countries. The ILO provides advice on how legislation can be improved, for example, by harmonizing the provisions of the laws relating to education and child labour, by increasing the scope of legislation to cover sectors such as agriculture and work in the informal economy and by defining how to determine the types of hazardous work to be covered by legislation. For example, the ILO Multidisciplinary Advisory Team for Andean, in Lima, commissioned studies in the Andean

---

[25] IPEC: *Good practices in action against child labour: A synthesis report of seven country studies*, op. cit., p. 10.

[26] L. Swepston: "Child labour: Its regulation by ILO standards and national legislation", in *International Labour Review* (Geneva, ILO), 1982, Vol. 121, No. 5, pp. 577-593.

Box 3.3

The role of legislation

- It translates the aims and principles of international standards into national law.
- It sets the principles, objectives and priorities for national action to combat [...] child labour.
- It creates the machinery for carrying out that action.
- It creates specific rights and responsibilities.
- It places the authority of the State behind the protection of children.
- It creates a common understanding among all the actors involved.
- It provides a yardstick for evaluating performance.
- It provides a basis and procedure for complaints and investigations.
- It provides legal redress for victims.
- It provides sanctions for violators.

Source: ILO and Inter-Parliamentary Union: *Handbook for parliamentarians: Eliminating the worst forms of child labour: A practical guide to ILO Convention No. 182* (Geneva, 2002).

subregion to help governments identify the gaps and inconsistencies in their legislation as a basis for law reform. It is equally important that legal processes are reformed, for example, to introduce "child-friendly" court processes and treatment of child witnesses in ways that respect the dignity of the children involved.

276. Legal instruments in a wide range of areas have a bearing on child labour, its causes and its consequences, including those relating to discrimination and equal opportunities at work, freedom of association and collective bargaining, forced labour and trafficking, minimum wages, labour inspection, social security, health and safety, small enterprises, education, family law, criminal law and child protection. The framework should be reviewed in its entirety for its coherence, balance and coverage with respect to child labour. Countries can draw on the experience of others. Useful sources are the ILO's Labour Legislation Guidelines [27] and the NATLEX database on national labour and social security law,[28] both of which have recently added more examples of national approaches and full-text legislation.

The challenge of enforcement

277. Putting the legal framework in place, however, is clearly only a first step, albeit a very important one. The more challenging aspect is how such legislation can be effectively put into practice, particularly as child labour is so often hidden in the informal economy and government labour inspecto-rates in developing countries may be severely under-resourced in terms of staff numbers, capacity and equipment to carry out their work effectively. Practical, effective mechanisms for enforcement are needed to define the res-ponsibilities of each party involved, to allow information to circulate freely among them and to create innovative mechanisms to generate critical information, particularly for the more hidden forms of child labour. People must also know about the law to be able to use it; raising awareness and legal literacy among children, families and communities about their rights and how to pursue them is an indispensable complement to legal reform.

---

[27] See www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/govlab/llg/main.htm

[28] See http://natlex.ilo.org

Birth registration

Birth registration is a "ticket to citizenship"

278. Governments need to provide for universal birth registration for children. Without this, children cannot access social services or schools, and minimum ages for employment can be neither monitored nor enforced. Yet many nations lack effective systems for recording births. Every year, about 40 million children or one-third of all births, go unregistered around the world.[29] Migrant children are particularly vulnerable to all forms of exclusion, which is compounded by their lack of official existence, increasing the likelihood that they will end up in child labour and often in its worst forms. Awareness-raising campaigns are essential to ensure that parents are aware of the importance of registration and know how to go about it.

Basic social services provision

Investment in children

279. One of a government's prime responsibilities is to provide for essential services to children and their families. Such investment is needed to fulfil children's rights to survival and development, and it is a crucial factor in long-term poverty reduction and the elimination of child labour. Yet, investment in children through health, education and social assistance usually represents only a small proportion of national budgets. Health care for mother and child, maternity protection schemes and immunization programmes, as well as social assistance and childcare for working mothers all have a role to play in combating poverty and child labour.[30]

280. A "child budget" seeks to establish what proportion of social services expenditure actually reaches the children who need it. For example, the Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction Programme in **Viet Nam** is reported not to reach the most needy groups, so that children may perceive no option but to work.[31] Systematic tracing of funds invested in child-related programmes, from national level to point of delivery, can reveal how much reaches the targeted children and how much is lost along the way. The fact that several ministries often share responsibility for children and the existence of substantial official and unofficial development assistance and domestic programmes outside the regular budget make such analysis difficult. But such a process can help improve the planning and delivery of public expenditure in the future.

Providing quality education for all

281.The provision of quality education for all children, as we have seen, is of crucial importance for the abolition of child labour. This means that:

- Primary education must be accessible to all children: available where children live, adequately equipped, for example, with heating, light and sanitation, at very low or no cost to the family, with quality curricula and teaching materials.
- Campaigning is needed to change prevailing negative attitudes to schools, alongside an improvement in their quality and relevance.
- Special efforts are needed to counter the factors that keep girls and disadvantaged and socially excluded groups, such as disabled children, migrants and the very poor, away from school.

---

[29] U. Dow: "Birth registration: The 'first' right", in *The progress of nations 1998* (New York, UNICEF), 1998, pp. 5-11.

[30] ILO standards provide benchmarks in some of these areas, e.g. the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183).

[31] World Bank: *A synthesis of participatory poverty assessments from four sites in Viet Nam: Lao Cai, Ha Tinh, Tra Vinh and Ho Chi Minh City*, Submission to the World Development Report 2000 by Viet Nam-Sweden Mountain Rural Development Programme, ActionAid, Save the Children Fund (UK) and Oxfam (GB) (Hanoi, Viet Nam, 1999).

- Teachers must be supported to do their job better, through good training and improvements in their status, pay and working conditions; respect for their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining is critical in this respect.
- Primary education and secondary education up to the minimum age for employment[32] should be made compulsory, and students' attendance monitored and supported where necessary.

Strengthening secondary education and vocational training

282. Education must not stop at primary level if young people are to be adequately prepared for the labour market and for decent work within it, rather than being confined to low-skilled, unprotected jobs in the informal economy. Yet in the least developed countries as a whole, secondary educational enrolment is only 19 per cent. For Africa, secondary enrolment is 34 per cent and for developing countries overall the rate is barely over 50 per cent.[33] Vocational training also needs to be better resourced, of higher quality and better integrated into the education system. Governments thus need to look carefully at the education system in its entirety, including both its quantity and its quality, if it is to meet the needs of children and society as a whole and contribute its proper part to the abolition of child labour.

283. Under the 2002 annual review under the follow-up to the Declaration, free compulsory education was cited as a measure being implemented to bring about the abolition of child labour by 33 per cent of governments replying (for enforcement of the minimum age for employment) and by 25 per cent (for elimination of the worst forms of child labour). The Government of **India** plans to introduce free compulsory education; a Bill providing for education as a fundamental right for children aged 6-14 years is pending approval by Parliament. The Government of **Lesotho** introduced free primary education in January 2000 as part of its efforts to eliminate child labour.

---

[32] During discussion of Convention No. 182, it was made clear that "basic education" in the context of the Convention referred to education up to the minimum age for employment (i.e. primary plus two or more years of secondary education).

[33] UNESCO: *Statistical Yearbook 1999* (Paris, UNESCO, 1999).

4. Action against child labour: A review of experience

Partnerships for effective action

The social partners and tripartite action

284. An essential feature of ILO technical cooperation is tripartite action involving governments and employers' and workers' organizations. The ILO social partners are uniquely placed to convey people's concerns at and about work to their governments. Furthermore, active participation by the social partners in policy development and practical action against child labour has proved to be crucial at the regional, national and international levels. An important number of IPEC's action programmes call for the participation of employers' and workers' organizations in their implementation.

Tripartite cooperation

Tripartite structures and agreements

285.When employers' and workers' organizations, together with individual companies or corporations and other stakeholders, become involved in the fight to eliminate child labour, then success is all the more likely. More coherent and effective policies and plans can be developed and implemented through tripartite and "tripartite-plus" structures and agreements based on constructive social dialogue at industry, national and international levels.

286. The recently adopted Protocol for the growing and processing of cocoa beans (see box 4.1) is a prime example of how major players in industry can join forces with human rights, workers' and other organizations to seek to put an end to the worst forms of child labour and forced labour across a whole sector.

287. In 1999, an agreement was reached between the International Tobacco Growers' Association (ITGA) and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) to fight child labour in the tobacco industry through a joint programme of research, information exchange and action. The agreement recognized the link between child labour and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the poor rural communities where tobacco is grown. This agreement was followed, in 2000,

Box 4.1

Extracts from the "Cocoa Protocol"

Guiding principles:

- *OBJECTIVE* – Cocoa beans and their derivative products should be grown and processed in a manner that complies with International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. ILO Convention No. 182 is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.
- *RESPONSIBILITY* – Achieving this objective is possible only through partnership among the major stakeholders: governments, global industry (...), cocoa producers, organized labour, non-governmental organizations, and consumers. Each partner has important responsibilities. ...
- *ILO EXPERTISE* – Consistent with its support for ILO Convention No. 182, industry recognizes the ILO's unique expertise and welcomes its involvement in addressing this serious problem. The ILO must have a "seat at the table" and an active role in assessing, monitoring, reporting on, and remedying the worst forms of child labour in the growing and processing of cocoa beans and their derivative products.

Source: Chocolate Manufacturers' Association and World Cocoa Foundation: "Protocol for the Growing and Processing of Cocoa Beans and Their Derivative Products in a Manner that Complies with ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour", 2001.

by the establishment of a partnership with a major private sector company to tackle child labour.[34]

288. Informal tripartite agreement was also reached recently, in the context of an ILO-sponsored workshop, in the gemstone industry to work together to ensure the elimination of all child labour from that industry, with "verifiable, time-bound targets" set by tripartite bodies in each country. The workshop recommendations highlighted that removal from child labour should not worsen the situation of the children or have an adverse effect on family income, and emphasized the importance of a credible monitoring system.[35]

289. Tripartite sectoral meetings organized by the ILO provide opportunities for governments and the social partners to address the abolition of child labour along with other sectoral concerns. Sectoral meetings that have considered child labour issues in 2000-01 include those on agriculture, fishing, footwear, leather, textiles and clothing, construction, and hotels and tourism.

Collective bargaining

290. Collective bargaining is another way for trade unions and employers to come together to combat child labour. One example of this is the agreement signed between the National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers (NUPAW) and the Kakira Sugar Works in **Uganda**, which includes a clause stating that no child under the age of 18 shall be employed by the company. Another example is the work of the National Confederation of Workers in Agriculture (CONTAG) in **Brazil**, which conducts training courses for trade union leaders on how to incorporate clauses on children's rights, including

---

[34] See www.endchildlabour.org/3conf.html

[35] International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM): Update No. 87 (2001).

child labour, into their collective bargaining agreements. A review of existing clauses on child labour found that they focused on the prohibition of the employment of children under the age of 14. Certain agreements included educational provisions for children of workers.

Model collective agreement

291. At the international level, the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) has developed a model collective agreement aimed at combating prostitution in tourism to assist affiliates in addressing this issue through collective bargaining. The model elaborates nine points for negotiation with employers. Codes of conduct have also been developed by trade unions and by employers for particular sectors (e.g. construction and tea). The ICFTU and the Global Union Federations (GUF, formerly the International Trade Secretariats) have produced a basic model code that has been adapted by some GUF to reflect sector-specific considerations.

Employers and their organizations

IOE resolution

292. Employers and their representative organizations have a key role to play in combating child labour, through mobilizing themselves and their members across the world to join the fight against it. Although a minority of employers, particularly in the informal economy, may contribute to the problem by offering children work, all employers can equally be part of the solution. A firm commitment to this cause was declared in 1996 in the resolution adopted by the General Council of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) calling on "employers everywhere" to raise awareness of the human, economic and social costs of child labour and to develop action plans to put its policies into effect.[36] The resolution specified a range of practical measures to be undertaken by employers to address child labour. Many of the important initiatives since undertaken by national employers' federations are described in the *Employers' handbook on child labour: A guide for taking action.*[37]

Dangers of precipitate action

293. In addition to the human dimension of the problem, most employers are acutely aware of the detrimental impact of child labour on human resources development, economic growth and ultimately on the ability of national economies and enterprises to compete globally. As stated in the IOE Handbook: "The mere accusation that a company is using child labour in its operations, either directly or indirectly, can lead to an immediate blow to its reputation and the threat of consumer boycotts." And such pressure can initially result in unfortunate consequences for the very children that are supposed to be helped. Box 4.2 demonstrates the dangers of precipitate action, but also what can be achieved by a multi-faceted programme of rehabilitation and education, coupled with an independent child labour monitoring system.

294. There is a wide range of potential roles for employers and their organizations in combating child labour. The more headline-grabbing initiatives at the corporate level include the adoption of voluntary codes of conduct by companies involved in international export markets, as well as various social labelling, certification and other market-based approaches associated with the "socially responsible business" movement.[38] An ILO survey of around 215 private sector codes in 1998 found that just under half addressed child labour; among these, the majority used "self-defined" prohibition, sometimes but not

---

[36] **General Council of the International Organisation of Employers, resolution on child labour, 73rd Ordinary Session, 3 June 1996.**

[37] **International Organisation of Employers: *Employers' handbook on child labour: A guide for taking action* (Geneva, International Organisation of Employers, 2001).**

[38] **ibid., p. 2.**

Box 4.2

Fighting child labour in the Bangladesh garment industry

International concern about the number of children employed in the fast-expanding Bangladesh garment industry led to the Harkin Bill in the United States in early 1993. This called for an immediate ban on the import to the United States of goods manufactured wholly, or in part, by child labour.

The Bill sent shock waves through the garment industry. Factory owners, in an effort to avoid possible sanctions, began dismissing child workers, many of whom then faced destitution.

This unfortunate experience led the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the ILO and UNICEF in 1995, aimed at the withdrawal of children from work. It provided for a special education programme for former working children, monitoring and verification in the garment factories, income compensation, skills training, micro-credit and entrepreneurship training for the children's families.

By the end of 2000, the proportion of garment factories using child labour had been reduced from 43 per cent in 1995 to less than 4 per cent. Around 27,000 child workers have been identified and withdrawn from BGMEA member factories; many of these children received rehabilitation through education, stipends and skills training.

Under a new MOU signed in June 2000, a follow-up project was envisaged to address, in addition to child labour monitoring, other issues of concern in the industry. The new project, to be supported by the InFocus Programme on Promoting the Declaration, will address workers' fundamental rights, health and safety in the factories and management systems and will strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Employment for law enforcement.

always specifying a minimum age for employment, usually of 14 or 15 years; fewer than 10 per cent of these codes referred to Convention No. 138.[39]

Importance of monitoring and enforcement

295. One key issue in all approaches is the need to devise and implement effective, transparent monitoring and/or enforcement mechanisms (whether strong government labour inspection, independent monitoring or other systems) to ensure that production chains are truly free of child labour. Another is to ensure that, before such measures are instituted, appropriate social protection mechanisms are in place for the children and families affected.

296. At country level, employers' organizations have been involved in:
- influencing the development of national policies on child labour;
- identifying child labour in specific industries or tasks;
- implementing basic educational and vocational training programmes;
- human resources development and skills enhancement;
- supporting alternative means of income generation for parents of child labourers;
- finding ways to improve children's working conditions as a transitional measure, outside the worst forms of child labour.[40]

297. Specific examples of action by employers at country level are awareness-raising activities in **Ghana**, **Nepal** and the **Philippines** (see box 4.3), and

---

[39] Governing Body doc. GB.273/SDL/1, para. 54. It is to be noted that this survey was carried out before the adoption of Convention No. 182.

[40] A. Tucker: "Strategies for employers and their organizations", in N. Haspels and M. Jankanish (eds.): *Action against child labour* (Geneva, ILO, 2000), p. 223.

Box 4.3

Philippine employers reward action against child labour

The Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) has established, with IPEC support, a scheme for recognizing "child-friendly firms". ECOP recently conferred the award on a major hotel in Manila found to have demonstrated success in adopting good business practices related to the abolition of child labour: compliance with labour laws and regulations, not employing children and ensuring that young workers perform non-hazardous work, conducting advocacy against child exploitation, and commitment to undertake collaborative activities with ECOP and other organizations against child abuse and exploitation.

sector-specific work in **India** (bangle-making, stainless-steel production, bidi-making, hotels and small automobile garages and workshops), **Kenya** (commercial coffee, rice and sugar plantations) and **Peru** (brick-kilns, garbage recycling and vending). Programmes to remove and rehabilitate child labourers are under way in Central America (coffee industry, targeting 20,000 children, more than most such programmes) and **Pakistan** (child domestic workers and soccer-ball stitchers) with the active support and participation of employers.

Innovative approaches to the challenge of child labourers

298. In **Turkey**, employers' organizations are responding to the challenge of child labourers (90 per cent are boys) employed in small-scale enterprises in which pay is low, hours are long and conditions not appropriate for their age and development needs. The Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Handicrafts (TESK) has established and funded a system of workplace inspection and consultation groups with initial support from IPEC. There are now 4,500 workplace inspection and consultation groups. Working adolescents have been directed into the government vocational training scheme and working conditions have also improved. Periodic medical screening of working children has improved both child and employer understanding of occupational safety and health. The Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (TISK) has concentrated its efforts on small and medium-sized enterprises in the metal industry, encouraging employers to register working children in formal apprenticeship programmes and to improve safety.

Employers are a diverse group

299. The wide array of possible approaches for employers and corporations to adopt points to a need for systematic, rigorous and independent assessment and documentation of how effective each one is, and for the elaboration of guidelines on their potential advantages and pitfalls in different situations. Employers are an extremely heterogeneous group, ranging from multinational corporations to micro-enterprises, and the measures appropriate to each category of employer, and even within categories, will be similarly diverse. Given the predominance of child labour in informal and hidden parts of the economy and at the end of long supply chains, the most effective approaches involve an alliance of partners working together at different levels.

Support from ACT/EMP

300. The ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) assists employers' organizations in member States with information, advice and assistance regarding child labour, often in collaboration with IPEC. ACT/EMP is carrying out a project in **Colombia**, **Costa Rica**, **Ghana**, **Guatemala**, **Peru**, **Senegal**, **Uganda** and **Zimbabwe** to enhance the participation of employers' organizations in national efforts to eliminate child labour. It aims to establish child labour units in each national employers' organization, to improve understanding of the characteristics and consequences of child labour among employers and to involve employers in advocating the elimination of child labour as a priority of national policy.

International action by business

301. Action involving the private sector also occurs at the international level. The Global Compact is a voluntary initiative launched by the United Nations Secretary-General in 1999 that challenges the business community to work with the United Nations to uphold nine human rights, labour and environmental principles, including all four ILO fundamental principles and rights at work. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has issued explicit guidelines prohibiting the use of forced or harmful child labour in the private sector projects it finances, making reference to the provisions of Convention No. 138.[41] Provisions aimed at avoiding child labour are increasingly being introduced into the guidelines of international agencies for procurement of goods and services. Government departments are following suit. The United States General Accounting Office (GAO) released, in January 2002, the report *Defense management: Industry practices can help military exchanges better assure that their goods are not made by child or forced labor*[42] that recommends a framework to ensure that its private label exchange merchandise is not produced by child or forced labour in the supplying factories located abroad.

Workers' organizations

Workers' organizations active at national and international levels

302. Workers' organizations have been active in the child labour field through direct project interventions, documentation, research and advocacy. Most of the GUF and many national trade union organizations have policies on child labour that formalize their commitment to work towards its abolition. The GUF have carried out studies on child labour in different sectors, for example, the International Federation of Building and Woodworkers (IFBWW) on brickkilns in **Malawi**, the International Textile, Garment, and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF) on the textile sector in Asia, and the Universal Alliance of Diamond Workers (UADW) on the involvement of child labour in the gemstone industry in **India**, **Sri Lanka** and **Thailand**. National trade unions have also undertaken surveys of child labour in specific sectors (see also box 4.4). The **Kenya** Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA), for example, participated in a study of child labour in tourism in the coastal region, with support from the IUF and the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV).[43] The Conservation, Hotels, Domestic and Allied Workers' Union (CHODAWU) in the **United Republic of Tanzania** has been active, with IUF, ACTRAV and IPEC support, in combating child labour through research, awareness raising, prevention and withdrawal. An IUF/ILO-sponsored seminar in 1998 involving representatives of CHODAWU and KUDHEIHA focused on child domestic workers; it resulted in the production of the trade union manual *Child labour in domestic service: Methods and strategies for policy development and action plans.* Trade unions have undertaken awareness-raising campaigns, including production of materials such as videos, manuals, leaflets, posters and T-shirts. For example, Public Services International (PSI) has developed a handbook, campaign materials and guidelines on how the public sector can ensure that child labour is not used in the goods and services that it procures.

Advocacy campaigns

303. The World Confederation of Labour (WCL) actively campaigns through its members for ratification and implementation of Convention No. 182. In March 2001, the ICFTU launched its Global Unions Campaign: Get involved to stop child labour, which includes the involvement of youth structures and committees representing the 15-18 year age group. The ICFTU has also

---

[41] See www.ifc.org/enviro/enviro/childlabor/child.htm

[42] United States General Accounting Office: *Defense management: Industry practices can help military exchanges better assure that their goods are not made by child or forced labor*, Report to Congressional Requesters (GAO-02-256, 2002), see www.gao.gov/new.items/d02256.pdf

[43] ILO: *Child labour in tourism on the Kenyan coast* (Geneva, 2000).

Box 4.4

Trade union work to combat the worst forms of child labour in the Philippines

The National Union of Workers in the Hotel, Restaurant and Allied Industries (NUWHRAIN) in the Philippines undertook a research and training/awareness-raising project that used innovative methods to reach children beyond the scope of many projects.

NUWHRAIN conducted in-depth interviews with 500 children working in Metro Manila, including those in illegal labour situations. The children were encouraged, with promises of anonymity and no reprisals, to give information that was used to build a socio-demographic profile of each child, along with other details of their lives and ambitions. The result was a detailed picture of the situation of the children – where they came from, how they became involved in labour, what they faced there and where it might lead. Fifty case studies were prepared for use in a collection of material: *At your service: Combating child labour in the tourism industry.* The material was used in training and awareness courses that NUWHRAIN leaders ran for workers, in advocacy work with government officials, for reference in collective bargaining with employers, and to mobilize workers in the tourism industry.

Source: P. Boonpala and J. Kane: *Trafficking of children: The problem and responses worldwide* (Geneva, ILO, 2001).

worked with the Global March Against Child Labour in a range of advocacy and information activities. ICFTU youth campaigns recognize that as young people usually make up the majority of the population in developing countries, this is an important group to target in the development of strong national trade union movements.[44]

304. Trade union influence can be increased when several unions join forces. For example, in **India** five national trade union centres and four teachers' organizations are working towards the elimination of child labour by regularly meeting to share experiences and information. Such cooperation is also evident in **Nepal**, **Sri Lanka** and **Thailand.**

Special role for teachers

305. Teachers' unions have a special role to play, given the centrality of education in any effective strategy to abolish child labour. Yet, as long as teachers' status, training and wages are inadequate – which is the case in so many places across the world – they will be sorely ill-equipped to fulfil their role in helping to keep children in school and out of work. The ICFTU has emphasized that action to ensure education for all must include support for teachers' rights to organize and to bargain collectively, and the removal of discriminatory barriers that exclude certain groups from the profession.[45] Education International adopted a resolution on child labour in 1998 and has developed a toolkit for teachers on child labour issues. Teachers can help to keep children in school by providing good quality, relevant education, but to do this they need good training, material and curricula. They are uniquely placed to raise awareness of the consequences of child labour at community level, and can also help monitor child labour incidence.

---

[44] See www.icftu.org/focus.asp?Issue=youth&Language=EN

[45] ICFTU submission to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, June 2001. See also ILO: Report of the Seventh Session of the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (CEART), International Labour Conference, 89th Session, Geneva, 2001, *Provisional Record No. 19*, pp. 40-45.

306. Unions can also lobby government regarding legislation. In **Paraguay,** the Paraguayan Education Workers' Trade Union (OTEP) contributed to moderating those articles of a draft Labour Code that would have favoured child labour. In **Brazil,** the National Confederation of Education Workers (CNTE) campaigns for children by conducting research and disseminating information on education and child labour, fighting for appropriate public policies and resource allocation for schools as well as for proper pay, status and training for teachers and social educators. Other recent examples of teachers' organizations working in innovative ways against child labour, with the support of IPEC, are in **Bangladesh**, **Egypt**, **Kenya**, **Nepal**, **Peru**, the **Philippines** and the **United Republic of Tanzania.**

Initiative by the media

307. Trade unions of media professionals also have an important role to play in combating child labour through responsible media coverage. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has produced draft guidelines and principles for reporting on issues involving children; these were published at the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Yokohama in December 2001.[46]

ACTRAV provides support

308. Child labour is one of the priority areas for technical cooperation for ACTRAV, which currently runs two worldwide projects dealing with child labour: *Developing national and international trade union strategies to combat child labour,* and Action against child labour through education and training. The objective of these projects is to strengthen the ability of trade union organizations to develop policy and action plans to combat child labour. Workshops and activities have been carried out in cooperation with the GUFs and national trade unions and federations. The projects are operational in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East in around 50 countries and territories.[47] ACTRAV also supports the GUF to press the international financial institutions to pursue policies that are consistent with the ILO fundamental principles and rights at work and ratified ILO Conventions, including those on child labour.[48] A series of booklets, *Trade unions and child labour,* has been developed by ACTRAV and disseminated widely to assist trade unions in their activities relating to child labour (see box 4.5).

Other partners in civil society

309. Many other partners also have an important contribution to make in the fight against child labour: children and their families, international and national non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, the media, universities and religious groups, to name but a few. Given the limited reach of formal institutions, including employers' and workers' organizations, into the informal economy, broad-based partnerships that capitalize on the comparative advantage of each partner must be forged.

310. The NGO role can take on particular importance in situations where freedom of association and expression is difficult and where the extent and severity

---

[46] See www.focalpointngo.org/yokohama/presskit/mediaguidelines.htm

[47] Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

[48] ILO: *Trade unions and the global economy: An unfinished story*, Background paper for the International Symposium to Strengthen Workers' Participation in the United Nations System and Impact on the Bretton Woods Institutions, Geneva, 24-28 Sep. 2001.

Box 4.5

The ACTRAV training package: *Trade unions and child labour*[1]

The training package was developed through a collective process involving trade unionists across the world, and tested through workshops held in Africa and Asia. It aims to help trade unions understand and develop their own specific role in relation to child labour.

The package comprises seven booklets:

- Guide to the booklets.
- Union policies and action plans to combat child labour.
- Fact finding and information about child labour.
- Campaigning against child labour.
- Collective bargaining to combat child labour.
- Using ILO standards to combat child labour.
- The tripartite structure to combat child labour.

[1] The package was produced under the ACTRAV project *Developing national and international trade union strategies to combat child labour*. The package is available in Arabic, English, Eritrean, French, Hindi, Spanish and Thai, and is being translated into Mongolian and other key languages.

of child labour is either unknown or concealed.[49] NGOs can also help vulnerable and marginalized groups, including child labourers, have their voices heard by government and other decision-makers at local, national and even international levels.

Move to rights-based approach

311. NGOs working in the field of child labour vary in size and scale from international through to local NGOs whose scope of operations may be limited to a single group of children in one town. NGOs can be broadly subdivided into those with a greater interest in advocacy and those with a greater interest in welfare and protection. After the CRC was adopted, international NGOs began to reconsider their work with children to bring about a change from an essentially welfare-based, adult-focused, charitable approach to a more children-centred, rights-based approach. NGOs often have a comparative advantage in piloting and evaluating alternative strategies and interventions at community level. They have also played a vital role in advocacy for the elimination of child labour by publishing materials in local languages and running training workshops for staff of local partners.[50]

Importance of community ownership

312. NGOs are active in advocacy and participatory research at local level in order to understand and change community attitudes to child labour. Considerable experience exists in ways to develop community ownership and long-term sustainability. This includes experience in promoting the involvement of children in decision-making.[51] As the ILO has found in Latin America, local NGOs can be well placed to build on the trust that exists at community level when setting up microfinance and micro-insurance schemes aimed to encourage parents to withdraw their children from work and to send them to school.[52]

313. Thus, IPEC projects frequently include NGOs as partners, along with employers' and workers' organizations and governments.

---

[49] ILO: *Child labour: A briefing manual* (Geneva, ILO, 1986), p. 42.

[50] See, for example, Save the Children Alliance: *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child training kit* (London, Save the Children (UK), 1997).

[51] A. Swift: *Working children get organised* (London, International Save the Children Alliance, 1999).

[52] L. Lavinas: *The appeal of minimum income programmes in Latin America* (Geneva, ILO, 2001).

Good practices in the abolition of child labour

314. Extensive experience now exists within and outside the ILO in effective interventions for the abolition of child labour. This Report deals with only a fraction of that experience. It presents an overview of some of the main lessons learned to date, and of the main types of intervention to combat child labour, giving examples of good practices that are emerging.

Important lessons learned in the fight against child labour

Action needed in three areas

315. On the basis of a decade of experience in IPEC, many important lessons have emerged and these are being reflected in the design of new programmes and the development of existing ones. IPEC examined experience in child labour programmes in seven countries in order to identify good practice examples.[53] The study confirmed that action is needed to create the conditions necessary for action on child labour, to build the capacity of major actors, and to assist working children directly and prevent new child labour.

Comprehensive approach needed

316. Building national ownership of programmes among a broad alliance of government and civil society organizations is crucial for effectiveness and long-term sustainability, but takes time. A comprehensive approach is needed, combining many different elements in a multi-pronged attack on child labour, through education and training, awareness raising to change attitudes, legal reform and enforcement, income generation and employment creation for adults, and appropriate social protection systems, with strong involvement of communities and children at all stages in the process.

317. Investment in prevention of child labour is the most cost-effective approach in the long run. But, while longer-term alternatives and prevention strategies are taking effect, it is imperative to act immediately to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, removing specific dangers and prohibiting children from engaging in dangerous activities.

Good information is vital

318. Information is a vital tool in planning effective programmes, but capacity needs to be built for its collection, analysis and dissemination. Action research is difficult and can even be dangerous in the case of worst forms. In addition, there may be many more worst forms than at first envisaged. Hazards are often overlooked because the harm done to children may at first be invisible, as with cognitive and psychological damage. Expert assessment of the actual risks to working children can be a powerful tool for motivating change among children, parents and policy-makers alike. Policy-makers can focus more easily on hazardous forms of labour, and this focus provides an entry point to deal with all child labour, and also adult labour, conditions.

319. Rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of the worst forms of child labour is difficult and costly. Cost-effective models that can be adapted and replicated more widely need to be established and documented. Community-based solutions offer the most promise, yet there are some cases in which families and communities may not be willing or able to welcome children back. Realistic alternatives for children who are withdrawn from work must be identified before this withdrawal commences.

IPEC's role to build capacity

320. Many national partner institutions lack capacity in programme design, delivery and monitoring. Capacity building can take place at the same time as action – there is no better way of learning than through practical experience.

---

[53] **Research was conducted in 1997-98 in seven countries where IPEC has been operational (Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, the Philippines, the United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand and Turkey). A synthesis report is available: IPEC: *Good practices in action against child labour* (Geneva, ILO, 2001).**

IPEC's role should increasingly be in building this capacity, providing advice, sharing experience and good practice, and acting as a catalyst and facilitator for the abolition of child labour. IPEC's own success cannot therefore be judged only in terms of the numbers of children and families directly benefiting from programme interventions. The development of the capacity of national partners to deal effectively with child labour is equally important and, in the long-run, the only sustainable solution to child labour.

321. Labour inspectors have a critical role to play in keeping workplaces free of child labour and in educating employers and community members. But they cannot adequately cover all child labour situations. Innovative mechanisms, involving a range of stakeholders, are required to monitor the informal economy. Such shared responsibility results in greater sustainability.

Typology of interventions against child labour

322. Table 8 presents a non-exhaustive typology of child labour interventions,[54] classified by the level at which they occur (children, family, social partners and civil society organizations, government) and by the category of intervention (education and training, social protection and welfare, rescue and rehabilitation, working conditions, monitoring and enforcement, advocacy and social mobilization). All projects and programmes involve a combination of interventions, at different levels. The table illustrates the diversity of measures that can be applied, adapted and combined in different ways.

Advocacy and social mobilization

Changing attitudes is key

323. Advocacy and social mobilization at all levels are crucial components of any effective effort to abolish child labour. More information than ever before is available, as are means at our disposal for communicating it – from traditional print, through the spoken word, to the electronic in all its forms – and each must be used to its best advantage. Information must be put to work to raise awareness among politicians, the public and parents, to motivate adult workers, employers and trade unions to protect children from exploitation, and to mobilize all sectors of society, including children, to put an end to child labour. The struggle against child labour is first and foremost a matter of changing attitudes. Once people at all levels are convinced that no one gains through child labour, action to abolish it is bound to encounter much less resistance and receive much greater active support. People must be convinced not only that child labour *should* be abolished but also that it *can* be abolished.

Campaign for ratification of Convention No. 182

324. The ILO campaign for universal ratification of Convention No. 182, launched in June 1999, has been an example of highly successful mobilization of public opinion on a global scale against the worst forms of child labour. This campaign has involved many different partners and has targeted wider audiences than the ILO constituents, including parliamentarians, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, national and international media. Many different communication technologies, campaign materials and approaches are used, including some addressed specifically to children. Campaign activities have been conducted at many high-profile international and regional events, including the African Cup of Nations in Mali in January 2002 with the Red Card to Child Labour campaign (see box 4.6). IPEC supports campaign activities at country level with local partners. Information materials

---

[54] **Based on data from A. Fyfe: *Child labour: A guide to project design* (Geneva, ILO, 1993), pp. 14-15.**

Table 8. A typology of child labour interventions

Category of intervention	Level of intervention			
	Children	Family	Social partners and civil society organizations	Government
Education and training	Access to appropriate schooling Non-formal education Vocational training Training in rights School meals	Educating parents on value of education, hazards of child labour and needs and rights of children Vocational/skills training Income replacement, e.g. stipends Parent-teacher links	Formal and non-formal education Vocational training Community-based training in rights Community-based monitoring of delivery and quality of education services	Expansion of education Compulsory education Education free or with costs offset for destitute families Improved access for girls and excluded groups National vocational training strategy
Social protection and welfare	Health monitoring Access to health care Counselling Children's clubs	Accessible social protection Welfare support	Community health centres Drop-in centres Advice on social protection Social dialogue and collective bargaining	Community health care Decentralization Social protection strategy for marginalized groups Poverty reduction strategies
Rescue and rehabilitation	Removal from the worst forms of child labour Rehabilitation, including family reintegration where possible	Economic alternatives, micro-credit, small business support Family counselling	Volunteer support Reducing stigma Community awareness of children's rights Community alternatives to institutional rehabilitation	Provision of rehabilitation facilities Support for community livelihood alternatives Capacity building in counselling and other relevant professional skills
Working conditions (protected work for 15+ year olds, or 14+ where this is the minimum age)	Alternatives to hazardous work Safe working environment Work placement schemes Apprenticeship schemes	Economic alternatives: information about hazards and safety	Protected work schemes Volunteer support Involvement in skills training Social dialogue and collective bargaining	Support for community-based initiatives Labour inspection School-to-work transition programmes
Monitoring and enforcement	Raising awareness of labour standards and national legislation Reporting and monitoring violations	Education on children's rights, labour standards and national legislation Reporting and monitoring violations	Independent monitoring system Self-monitoring by employers Mobilizing trade unions on behalf of unorganized and marginal workers Raising awareness among employers Community-Based Organizations (CBO) for pressure and enforcement Organizing and involving women's groups	New or revised legislation Implementing time-bound programmes Expanding and enhancing labour inspection Birth registration Training of enforcers (police, customs, border guards, lawyers, judges) Creating children-friendly courts and legal processes
Advocacy and social mobilization	Peer recruitment Developing awareness of rights Child-to-child approach Involvement in campaigns Developing democratic involvement and decision-making Targeting by mass media and use of mass media by children, e.g. comics	Targeting by mass media involvement in campaigns Awareness of rights and obligations	Citizen's groups Community theatre Sporting and other events Campaigns around local child labour issues Mobilization of teachers, women, religious groups, CBOs, employers' groups, trade unions	Using state-owned media Including rights and child labour in high-level political statements Widespread high-profile posters and hoardings throughout national transport systems (including airports)

Box 4.6

The Red Card to Child Labour campaign

The ILO's Red Card to Child Labour campaign was launched at the start of the 2002 African Cup of Nations in Bamako, Mali, in January 2002. The campaign is co-sponsored by the African Football Confederation (CAF) and the Organizing Committee for the African Cup of Nations (COCAN) 2002. It aims to capitalize on the huge popularity of football and the publicity the tournament will generate across the continent and beyond, to raise public awareness of child labour and encourage people everywhere to join the global movement to abolish it.

The campaign is symbolized by the red card handed out by referees for serious violations of rules on the soccer field.

that take on board the prevailing cultural perceptions of child labour are produced in local languages on the basis of information gathered through national surveys.

325. Many other organizations have also taken up the cause of universal ratification of Convention No. 182 with zeal, reflecting the strong international consensus that it embodies. For example, both the ICFTU and the WCL are carrying out campaigns promoting ratification of Convention No. 182 in the context of the overall abolition of child labour. Cooperation with networks such as the Global March Against Child Labour and the Sub-Group on Child Labour of the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (which has its own campaign to promote ratification of Convention No. 182) further enhances impact at all levels. While the ILO campaign currently focuses on encouraging ratification of Convention No. 182, it also aims to raise awareness of child labour more generally and to mobilize society for implementation of the Convention. UNICEF is also promoting ratification through its country programmes.

Strategies for mobilization

326. Strategies for social mobilization at a national level must be tailored to the various target groups. Experience shows that, inter alia, the following approaches are effective:

- creating a social alliance of institutions; bringing together the various institutional players on a joint platform to give them greater power to influence policy and ensure that adequate resources are mobilized;
- awareness raising among the general public, using all forms of media from radio and TV to street theatre and exhibitions, with the participation of children and youth as well as that of prominent personalities;
- obtaining public commitments by policy-makers and opinion leaders;
- empowerment of communities at risk of and affected by child labour. Community-based organizations are often best placed to ensure that programmes to combat child labour are realistic and adapted to the local context. In **Nepal**, for example, community surveillance groups are active in preventing the trafficking of children by identifying, monitoring and supporting "at risk" families and children.

327. The mass media have a critical role to play in communicating information about child labour. The information they convey can have a significant influence on public policy and programming, as well as on the priorities of donors. Images and stories of street children, for example, have tended to direct money into projects targeted at this group, at the expense of other groups who may indeed be larger or in greater need of help. Sensationalist treatment of exploited children in the press is contrary to children's rights and may even endanger children and the people who work with them. Various initiatives are under way to ensure that child labourers get a fair and balanced hearing in the media. An NGO called The PressWise Trust, working together with the

International Federation of Journalists and UNICEF, offers training to journalists to help them respect the rights of children when dealing with the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and encourages them to establish their own codes of conduct to regulate coverage of child abuse.

Role of mass media

328. The use of radio, TV and the press is at the top of the list for awareness raising according to a seven-country study by IPEC. One of the most effective examples encountered was a TV series on the lives of working children shown on a popular children's show in the **Philippines**, which was later reproduced on video and shown in schools. In the **United Republic of Tanzania**, the Department of Information Services established, with support from IPEC, a partnership with leading newspapers, radio stations and TV channels. Each partner publishes articles or broadcasts programmes on child labour at least once a month. They visit project sites in order to give solution-oriented messages concerning child labour. The journalists concerned meet regularly to review publications and take steps to improve the quality of information. Media initiatives such as videos, children's books and cartoons form a key part of IPEC activity in Latin America. The Government of **Germany** reports a project it has initiated, with Terre des Hommes and the European Commission, which has produced a brief information film on the fight against child sex tourism.[55] The film is screened on the international flights of various airline companies, and has also been widely shown on German public and private television stations.

329. Current and former child labourers can themselves be the most powerful advocates for change (see box 4.7).

Good education systems can prevent child labour

330. Countries have adopted, often with IPEC support, a range of approaches to ensure that children withdrawn from child labour, those who remain work-

Box 4.7

The Global March Against Child Labour

A number of leading child rights and human rights organizations joined forces in 1997 to plan the Global March Against Child Labour, to mobilize worldwide opinion against child labour and in favour of education.

A broad-based coalition was brought together around the cause, involving children (many of them former and current child labourers), NGOs, trade unions, activists, governments, academics, journalists, religious leaders and celebrities. The Global March began in January 1998 when three groups of marchers set out from Manila, Sao Paulo and Cape Town. It crossed a total of 107 countries across the world, collecting children's thumbprints and holding multiple events to raise awareness along the way, before arriving in Geneva, where the marchers were greeted by a standing ovation from the delegates to the International Labour Conference in June 1998.

The Global March continues its work in information and advocacy against child labour, and has taken up the issue of Education For All as an integral part of its campaign.[1]

[1] The Global March Against Child Labour also manages the Child Labour News Service, which produces a fortnightly news bulletin covering child labour issues and solutions around the world, see www.childlabournews.info

---

[55] Information received from the Government of Germany in response to the questions raised by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in document E/C.12/Q/GER.2.

ing in the short term, as well as those at risk of being drawn into labour, are provided with and able to derive the maximum benefit from education.[56]

Education cannot start too early

331. School readiness programmes – for very young children – provide an excellent opportunity to spread the word to parents and communities about developmental needs, rights and the importance of education. Children whose early childhood experiences are positive perform better in school, and they are less likely to drop out and be drawn into child labour. Such programmes can also help detect special needs of children.

332. Children-friendly schools can provide a safe learning environment, equitable access, and also recognition of children's rights and responsibilities. Participation of children, families and communities is key to the philosophy. For example, in **India,** the M. Venkatarangaiah Foundation in Andhra Pradesh, uses a multi-faceted approach strategy to prevent early drop-out and involvement in child labour, by motivating parents, easing enrolment problems and bridging the gap between home and school. The programme involves government teachers' groups, local community elders, employers/landlords involved in bonded labour and locally elected representatives. As a result of the systematic extension of this programme, 85 villages have been made child labour free in the past decade.

Flexible response in education

333. Flexible timetables and other forms of flexibility in education can also help to accommodate the needs of working children and their families, as a transitional measure. In **Mexico,** for example, the national Agricultural Day Labourers' Programme of the Secretariat of Social Development addresses the needs of children of migrant workers, who often work together with their families and may live away from their home areas for months at a time, thus missing school. The programme allows children to enrol in a school in one state and attend in another.[57] The Government is also undertaking a non-formal edu-cation (NFE) programme for urban child labourers, aimed at using community and family strengths to ensure that working children and adolescents stay at school. A model was designed, targeting 90 per cent of the children working in streets and public places. It is currently operational in 35 towns with the aim to achieve national coverage by 2002.[58] The Government also offers academic and training grants.

334. Different forms of NFE have been widely tried and tested. NFE is crucial in smoothing the transition from work to school for child labourers who are not ready or able to make the move straight from the workplace to formal school. NFE programmes that combine basic education with practical life and work skills are responsive to the needs of former child labourers, enabling them to re-enter the labour market later in better jobs. NFE is not normally an alternative to the state-run formal system, but rather a stepping stone to mainstreaming children into formal schools as and when they are ready. IPEC's general guideline is that children under 10 years old should go directly to mainstream education systems, those aged 11-12 should leave NFE within 12 months and enter the formal system, and for older children NFE can lead either to mainstreaming, or to vocational training, higher education or employment.

Economic incentives and compensation

335. The ILO has found that economic incentives, if they are implemented as part of a comprehensive approach that includes improved educational quality, awareness raising and community involvement, can encourage parents to send

---

[56] N. Haspels et al.: *Action against child labour: Strategies in education* (Geneva, ILO, 1999).

[57] United States Department of Labor: *By the sweat and toil of children. Vol. V. Efforts to eliminate child labour* (Washington, DC, United States Department of Labor, 1998), Ch. 4.

[58] ILO: *Review of annual reports under the Declaration. Part II* (Geneva, 2002), report of the Government of Mexico, pp. 421-426.

children to school, and thus help to reduce child labour.[59] The food-for-education programmes are one of many schemes that provide compensation in return for school attendance. Other mechanisms include school meals, family food supplements, school vouchers, cash stipends, skills and vocational training that bring in some income, micro-credit loans and scholarships. For example, *bolsa escola* is a family stipend/school scholarship initiative that has been taken up on a national scale in **Brazil** and is now being extended to the least developed countries in Africa. It provides a minimum monthly salary to poor families that agree to keep all their 7-14-year-olds enrolled in and recording 90-per-cent attendance in school. Unemployed adult family members have to be enrolled in the national employment system. At the same time, a School Savings Programme was implemented as an additional incentive. The school drop-out rate was reduced to a minimal level. Such schemes can alleviate poverty in the short term as well as increase a family's assets in the long term. And the cost need not be prohibitive: in **Brazil**, it was 1 per cent of the Federal District's annual budget.[60]

336. Education programmes can form part of the response to a crisis, thus preventing the children affected being drawn into child labour (see box 4.8).

Children-centred teaching methods

337. High-quality education means that teachers must be trained and confident in children-centred teaching approaches and methods, and skilled in classroom management and in evaluating learning. Teacher training is a feature of the Time-Bound Programme in the **United Republic of Tanzania**, where less than 50 per cent of primary school teachers have a Grade A certificate (even lower for female teachers) and the better teachers are concentrated in urban areas.[61]

338. Apprenticeship and vocational training also have a crucial role to play in preparing young people for decent work and preventing child labour. Traditional apprenticeship systems can be upgraded by, for example, providing access to capital and credit, work premises, craft associations and technological improvements. Skills upgrading of trainers, through intensive evening courses, can be an effective means of improving informal apprenticeships, as has been demonstrated in the **United Republic of Tanzania.**

Better market research for vocational training schemes

339. Vocational training schemes could be much improved by better market research to determine not only what skills are in demand now, but also what skills will be in demand in the next five to ten years when these young people will be attempting to support their own families. Better follow-up programmes need to be put in place to support trainees once they graduate. For former child labourers who have missed out on formal schooling, broader forms of vocational training that provide basic education, life skills (including job-seeking and work habits) and a range of transferable skills, rather than a single skill, may be the most effective.[62]

340. IPEC programmes now frequently include a vocational training component for older children. For example, a project in North West Frontier Province in **Pakistan** has enabled the Directorate of Manpower and Training to deliver six to ten months' pre-vocational and vocational training in car repair, tailoring and domestic wiring to around 100 boys and 200 girls; an evaluation in

---

[59] ILO: *Child labour: Targeting the intolerable*, op. cit., pp. 106-7.

[60] United States Department of Labor: *By the sweat and toil of children*,op. cit., Ch. 4.

[61] IPEC: *Project document: Supporting the Time-Bound Programme on the worst forms of child labour in the United Republic of Tanzania* (Geneva, ILO, 2002), p. 5.

[62] W. Grubb and P. Ryan: *The roles of evaluation for vocational education and training: Plain talk on the field of dreams* (Geneva, ILO, 1999).

Box 4.8

IPEC action after the earthquake in Turkey

The devastating earthquake in Turkey in August 1999 had profound economic and socio-cultural consequences, leading to the emergence of new vulnerable groups including working children.

An action programme was designed to ensure that child labour was addressed within the framework of the overall development activities of the earthquake-affected areas. The programme focuses mainly on the prevention and rehabilitation of working street children through primary schooling and special after-school centres. The Ministry of Education (MONE) made special provision for the placement of working children into primary schools. The school expenses of the children are met by MONE. To date, 1,500 working children have been placed into the primary education system. The programme emphasizes retention as well as enrolment, and a monitoring and education support programme is in place to ensure retention and educational performance.

Children attending primary school are brought to after-school centres for educational support. In order to withdraw children totally from work and prevent the expected increase in the number of children working during the summer holidays, the centres have started to plan extensive summer activities.

In parallel, efforts have been made to link individual action programmes to a "multi-sectoral platform" to ensure that a supportive institutional and policy environment is created. Action committees against child labour have been created within the framework of the programme, involving key governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), employers' and workers' associations, and universities.

mid-2001 showed the children's interest to be high. Models are needed of how such training can be provided at a reasonable cost and on a large scale.[63]

Social protection to prevent child labour

341. Systems of social protection provided by the State or non-state agencies must be carefully designed and implemented to complement rather than to undermine existing forms of resource transfer through family, community, kin or religious group. As can be seen, informal social protection can have powerful benefits in terms of strengthening social capital, social cohesion and governance.

Innovative approaches to social protection

342. Families need income security and social benefits, such as health insurance, in order to survive in the short term and plan for the long term, and particularly to be able to view investment in schooling as a viable option for their children.[64] Micro-insurance schemes, organized by civil society groups at the local level can be linked into larger structures, such as banks and credit schemes; the State can help by providing start-up funds, matching workers' contributions and developing a supportive legislative and regulatory framework.[65] Self-help groups can provide assistance through cooperatives, mutual benefit societies and burial societies that are usually financed by beneficiary contributions.

---

[63] IPEC: *Evaluation report: Combating child labour through education and training in Peshawar/Pakistan* (PAK/98/MO2/SDC) (Geneva, ILO, 2001).

[64] ILO: *Social security: Issues, challenges and prospects*, op. cit., p. 21.

[65] ibid., p. 32.

343. The ILO STEP (Strategies and Tools against social Exclusion and Poverty) programme, together with IPEC, is providing services that enable community-based groups to develop their own social protection schemes.[66] For example, in the **United Republic of Tanzania**, STEP has a joint project with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to increase access to quality health care through micro-insurance schemes. In **Bangladesh**, similar work is under way with the Grameen Bank and the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee; this project also addresses employment creation for poor rural women.[67]

344. Integrated approaches offer the best way forward. The ILO is working towards a wider vision of social security for all workers, which will include housing and food security, child education benefits, medical care, family benefits, and support in times of sickness, unemployment, invalidity, old age and death. This broader view addresses many of the shocks to family income that are known to result in child labour.[68]

345. The HIV/AIDS pandemic presents a huge challenge for social protection; appropriate ways of supporting children are needed so that they do not become victims of child labour (see box 4.9).

Income opportunities for families of child labourers

346. Development of economic alternatives for adult family members is another key component in a broad vision of social protection to combat child labour. Small enterprise development and productivity improvement can help increase family income and hence reduce the need for children to work. There is a vast amount of experience in this field, which must be reflected in the design of new project interventions.[69] For example, ways must be found to ensure that small businesses set up using microfinance facilities do not inadvertently increase demand for child labour, either directly by drawing them into the production process, or indirectly by increasing the need for a child to undertake household chores when his/her mother is away working.

347. In **Bangladesh** and the **United Republic of Tanzania**, the ILO Gender Promotion Programme (GENPROM), in collaboration with IPEC, is examining the relationship between women's employment and child labour to see how an increase in the former can most effectively lead to a reduction in the latter. Microfinance must be integrated with other community empowerment interventions. Ways are needed to combine financial with non-financial services in a sustainable way, and in line with good practice in the provision of such services, which increasingly looks to "market-led" rather than "welfare" approaches, including for the poorest client groups. The impact of loan repayment on the availability of family resources to pay for children's education and care must also be carefully considered.

348. The InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (SEED) undertakes activities to help parents engaged in income-generating activities to withdraw their children from labour, and to support small and micro-enterprises to improve working conditions and productivity, and phase out their use of child labour. In **El Salvador**, the parents of children who work in firework manufacture and on garbage dumps are given access to credit, provided that they withdraw their children from work and send them to school. The credit agency monitors this and its overheads are

---

[66] ILO: *STEP: Strategies and tools against social exclusion and poverty* (Geneva, ILO, 1999).

[67] IPEC: *Project document: Supporting the Time-Bound Programme on the worst forms of child labour in the United Republic of Tanzania* (Geneva, ILO, 2001), p. 19.

[68] ILO: *Social security: Issues, challenges and prospects*, op. cit., p. 8.

[69] Income-generation components of projects supported by IPEC are soon to be the subject of a thematic evaluation.

Box 4.9

Initiatives to address HIV/AIDS and child labour

Eliminating HIV/AIDS-related discrimination at work takes on particular importance for children, protecting them not only from stigmatization but also from the possibility of having to work to replace lost adult earnings. Such issues are being taken up through the ILO programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work (ILO/AIDS) and by IPEC. The ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, launched in June 2001, provides guidelines for workers, employers and governments to develop responses at enterprise, community and national levels – including for prevention, caring for workers and their families and removing discrimination.

While HIV/AIDS has become the focus of much attention and activity at national and international levels, most governments have only recently begun to address the effects of the pandemic on child labour. For example, in Africa, some governments have reduced or removed school fees for orphaned children. Usually, such programmes are for all orphaned children, thus avoiding potential stigma for those orphaned by AIDS. Little has yet been done to implement specific policies to reduce the likelihood of them being drawn into child labour.

So far, NGOs have tended to take the lead in undertaking direct service programmes, seeking to fill some of the gaps in children's lives as a result of the death of a parent. Responses that are being tested include the provision of flexible schooling, creation of funds to pay school fees of orphans, micro-savings/micro-credit initiatives to help cover the education expenses of children and training programmes directed at young workers. Child victims of commercial sexual exploitation require particularly urgent assistance with respect to HIV/AIDS.

paid out of the interest generated on the loans. Assistance is provided to parents to find employment and vocational training.

Useful ILO tools available

349. SEED highlights the important role that generation of quality jobs for adults in small and micro-enterprises can play in creating sustainable alternatives to child labour. There are many ILO tools already available to support such work – including Start and Improve Your Business, Grassroots Management Training, and Women's Entrepreneurship Development. Useful tools have also been produced to enhance productivity in small enterprises (Improve your Working Environment and Business and Work Improvements in Small Enterprises), which can also contribute to creation and maintenance of child-labour-free workplaces. Such tools can be adapted for use in different situ-ations; follow-up with trainees is essential to support them and to see the impact of the training, including whether, indeed, children have benefited as a result.

Rescue and rehabilitation

Withdrawing children from hazardous child labour

350. Children in the worst forms of child labour need urgent action for rescue and rehabilitation. Measures used to withdraw children from hazardous work and other worst forms range from persuasion (through dialogue with parents, children, employers or law enforcement authorities) to more radical "rescue" operations. Experience shows that community-based, integrated solutions tailored to the specific needs of each target group, with close community participation, are the most effective. Alongside action to rescue child victims of the worst forms of labour, a holistic approach is needed that attacks underlying family poverty through long-term solutions, including access to land, housing and economic opportunities. Although cultural perceptions of long-

standing practices can limit success initially, even these can be overcome by painstaking work.

351. In **Nepal**, children who were bonded labourers under the *kamaiya* system prevalent in the western part of the country were targeted in an IPEC programme that built a broad alliance between government, employers, workers and NGOs. It combined legislative reform, enforcement mechanisms, policy development, direct support, alternative economic opportunities and unionization of adult workers. Working children were mainstreamed into formal schools and their families provided with microfinancing through credit/savings groups. Parents were persuaded to remove their children from bonded labour, through village-based awareness raising. Following the decree by the Government of Nepal in July 2000, making the *kamaiya* system illegal, a joint Declaration-IPEC project was launched. It continues to support local partners in a wide variety of ways, to ensure that former adult and child bonded labourers do not fall back into exploitative labour relationships but secure sustainable alternative livelihoods and that children benefit from educational and other support.

Working with communities

352. In the carpet-weaving industry in **Pakistan**, the Bunyad Literacy Community Council (BLCC) in Punjab, with the Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (PCMEA), set up the training and education for carpet-weaving children as a community-based rehabilitation and prevention programme, which encouraged awareness and participation of community members in a range of project activities aimed at improving the situation of child carpet-weavers, including counselling, non-formal education, recreation, health and safety services. Having gradually gained acceptance in the community, social workers were able to advise families on a whole range of work- and child-development-related issues. "Social workers meet family problems head on, motivate the children and their parents, encourage children not to drop out from classes and help raise awareness of the entire community on the consequences of child labour."[70] Such sector- or industry-specific initiatives make sense where there is a concentration of children in certain hazardous types of work, although care must be taken to ensure that action in one sector does not simply push children into another, possibly worse, form of work.

353. Considerable experience has been gained in working with street children. In **Namibia**, the Ministry of Health and Social Services is running a programme that aims to take homeless children off the street by placing them in shelters until they can enter vocational training or other appropriate facilities. Their parents or guardians are offered income-generating assistance. In **Haiti**, the Government Action Plan provides for the social rehabilitation of street children using functional literacy programmes and canteens providing one hot meal per day. The plan also emphasizes the reorganization and extension of the social welfare system in favour of the most vulnerable groups.

Approaches to combat trafficking at different levels

354. IPEC-GENPROM strategies to combat trafficking in the Greater Mekong subregion include direct assistance, counselling, repatriation and family reintegration, advocacy, capacity building and the enhancement and enforcement of legislation at country level and through bilateral and subregional agreements. The project takes care to ensure that activities are locally relevant. Interventions are designed by local implementing agencies in consultation with target families. Income-generating schemes designed to prevent trafficking are based on analyses of local market needs and informal education materials are grounded in local cultural understanding. The project has

---

[70] IPEC: *Action against child labour: Lessons and strategic priorities for the future: A synthesis report* (Geneva, ILO, 1997).

sought to avoid top-down planning, even in countries where this might be expected by the government, through the use of participatory approaches.

Child victims of sexual exploitation require special support

355. Particularly sensitive approaches are needed for children who have been sexually exploited. In **Nepal**, IPEC has developed an approach to the rehabilitation of children and adolescents rescued from commercial sexual exploitation. Children who are kept in remand homes and police custody after being rescued must be protected from further abuse, and ways found to spare them the trauma of court appearances. Therapy and counselling must be child centred and non-judgemental. Training should contribute to self-esteem and provide marketable skills that will effectively counter the lure of income available through prostitution (see table 9).

356. IPEC's thematic evaluation on trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children[71] pointed to lessons learned from work in this area, including the need to intervene in the source areas to interrupt the flow of child labourers, to build coalitions with law enforcement agencies to change attitudes that seek to punish victims rather than violators, and to target awareness raising at specific groups, such as the police in border areas or men in areas where prostitution is concentrated. The evaluation also highlighted approaches that have not been successful, for example, prevention programmes that do not simultaneously tackle demand for prostitution, programmes that do not include health aspects (disease prevention, health education and birth control), running institutional homes and lengthy psychotherapy for victims, and projects focusing on traditional forms of prostitution such as in streets, bars and brothels, while ignoring other forms that proliferate elsewhere.

Meeting the challenge of helping child domestic workers

357. Increasing experience exists with prevention and rescue of child domestic workers, despite the difficulties of access to this group (see also box 4.10). For example, in rural areas of the **United Republic of Tanzania** certain poverty-stricken areas are well-known sources of child domestic workers. The Conservation, Hotels, Domestic and Allied Workers' Union undertook an integrated package of activities with IPEC support. The project began with awareness raising and social mobilization in five villages, through radio broadcasts, community seminars, newspaper articles and brochures in Kiswahili, as well as public meetings on child labour. Child labour committees were formed and trained on how to address child labour in the commu-

Table 9. IPEC's approach to the rehabilitation of children and adolescents in Nepal

General	
Focus on the potential of the survivors Focus on confidence-building measures in the first stabilizing period Focus on re-establishing trustworthy human relationships Focus on development of individual action plans for sustainable rehabilitation (based on a mix of individual and group counselling)	
Adolescents	Younger children
■ Focus on developing the economic potential leading to economic independence of youth/adolescents ■ Focus on developing multiple life scenarios for post-rehabilitation, establishing support networks/live-in collectives among youth	■ Focus on involvement of families before reunion takes place ■ Focus on finding viable alternatives to family reunion, such as fostering ■ Mainstream into education through transitional education programmes

Source: *IPEC: Supporting the Time-Bound Programme in Nepal* (Geneva, ILO, 2001), p. 21.

---

[71] IPEC: *Action against trafficking and sexual exploitation of children: Going where the children are* ... (Geneva, ILO, 2001). The evaluation covered programmes in Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, the Philippines and Thailand.

Box 4.10

Domestic workers in the Philippines – strength through organizing

Samahan at Ugnayan ng mga Manggagawang Pantahanan (SUMAPI) is an organization of domestic workers, including child domestic workers. SUMAPI was organized through the initiative of another NGO, the Visayan Forum Foundation which, in turn, has collaborated with IPEC. SUMAPI has been an important channel for domestic workers to develop their social and economic skills as well as to advocate for their rights. It assists in organizing core groups and chapters of child domestic worker organizations that provide for meaningful participation of children in the planning and delivery of peer services, as well as in advocacy of the child domestic worker agenda.

nity, formulate by-laws and carry out censuses. A revolving fund was established for very poor households so that they could begin small-scale businesses, for which they were provided with training in entrepreneurial skills.[72] In **Kenya**, the African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) has been involved, with IPEC support, in school-based income generation as a means of preventing children entering domestic work. The funds generated are used to help children in a variety of ways, determined by the communities concerned, with support from ANPPCAN. IPEC has evaluated these experiences together with others in **Kenya, Pakistan**, the **Philippines** and the **United Republic of Tanzania**.[73]

Pointers for IPEC from evaluation

358. Experience shows that community-based strategies are cost-effective and sustainable in the long run, but require time-consuming facilitation, support and follow-up by the implementing agency. Other findings are that school-based income generation can be effective; and that attempts to reunite child domestic workers with their families are not always advisable. Overall, the evalu-ation emphasized the need for a strategic and integrated approach by IPEC. It encouraged IPEC to take up a networking role to strengthen links between organizations. This challenge is being taken up by IPEC through a global, multi-partner initiative to combat child domestic labour involving, in addition to ILO constituens, Anti-Slavery International, Save the Children Fund (UK) and UNICEF. The programme is active in selected countries in Africa, Central and South America and Asia, with financial support from several donors.

How to tackle hazardous work

359. The problem of hazardous work has been a priority of IPEC since the programme began. In 1996-97, some two-thirds of IPEC's 700 action programmes in 20 participating countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America targeted children in hazardous work and hazardous working conditions. The challenges of tackling these forms of child labour were recognized early on: the difficulty in identifying and locating the children, the lack of precise and universal definitions of what constitutes hazardous work and the need to find appropriate partners to work with these children.[74]

---

[72] ILO: Papers prepared for the United States Department of Labor and International Labour Organization Conference, Advancing the Global Campaign Against Child Labor: Progress Made and Future Actions, 17-18 May, Washington, DC, 2000.

[73] IPEC: *Thematic evaluation on IPEC interventions: Child domestic labour*, Draft report (Geneva, ILO, 2001).

[74] Governing Body doc. GB.271/TC/2, p. 13.

Removing workplace hazards

360. While knowledge in this area is far from complete, enough is known to act immediately to reduce hazards at work, particularly for children in the 15-17-year age group, as well as for younger children who cannot be immediately removed from work. Such interventions include technological change to replace the hazardous substance or process, changes to isolate the children from the hazard, training children and adults in what constitutes an occupational hazard, and how to reduce exposure to it. Providing personal protective equipment, such as gloves and helmets, is not usually a viable option. Such equipment is rarely developed specifically for children; therefore it will not fit, it will be inefficient and uncomfortable and the children will probably not use it regularly, if at all. Medical check-ups should accompany evaluation of workplace hazards, so that the links can be traced and appropriate interventions made. When the hazards cannot be reduced or removed or there cannot be adequate protection, children should be removed immediately from that hazardous environment. Labour inspection services can play a crucial role in monitoring for hazardous child labour, as well as in its prevention and in more proactive interventions for withdrawal and rehabilitation.

A comprehensive programme

361. In the **Dominican Republic,** child labour has increased in the cultivation of flowers and vegetables, despite the hazards of pesticide use. Many children drop out of school, others never attend. Education, together with legal action, monitoring and social mobilization were the main components of a recent programme. Children were assessed, given health checks and their family situation was evaluated. They completed a three-month educational bridging programme during which they received food supplements and medical care. Grants were given to help with school clothes and other supplies, and families signed a written agreement to give priority to school attendance, while receiving loans to compensate for loss of income from child work. Selected final-year school pupils provided individual help to each of the 374 children from 17 rural communities. The presence of these "promoters" aided active monitoring and demonstrated the value of capitalizing on the strengths and enthusiasm of young people at community level.[75]

Networks to tackle hazardous work

362. IPEC is establishing national, regional/subregional and global networks to address hazardous child labour. These include occupational safety and health specialists and other related groups. Those non-traditional IPEC partners that already have knowledge and skills on identifying and reducing hazards for adult workers are invited to broaden the scope of their action to children. The first preparatory Asian Network meeting took place in November 2001; a pilot project on agriculture, stone-crushing and footwear has started in **Indonesia,** the **Philippines** and **Thailand.** Research findings and practical solutions are shared between the different countries and institutions in the network. Similar network efforts are under way in anglophone and francophone Africa and in Latin America. The main collaborators include the ILO InFocus Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment, the World Health Organization, the International Commission on Occupational Health and the International Occupational Hygiene Association.

363. Almost all new projects on hazardous child labour and other worst forms are multi-dimensional, containing project elements that address family poverty, education of the child workers and, sometimes, the trauma that they have experienced. For example, the South-East Asia fishing project is working with fishing communities and employers to stop children working on *jermals* (fishing platforms far out at sea) in **Indonesia.** Children removed from the *jermals* are placed in shelters where they receive counselling, food and non-formal education, until they can be placed in vocational training programmes.

---

[75] **ILO: Papers prepared for the United States Department of Labor and International Labour Organization Conference, op. cit.**

Good practice examples

364. The seven-country study by IPEC[76] describes a number of good practices in dealing with hazardous work, which do not necessarily involve total withdrawal from work for the older children, for example, offering children alternative, safer income-earning opportunities combined with schooling, removing the hazard from the production process, providing health checks and services through mobile clinics, setting up "drop-in" centres to strengthen children's ability to protect themselves through knowledge of their rights, involving trade unions to bargain for better working conditions, encouraging community empowerment through organization of village committees and awareness raising, producing training manuals and curricula on hazardous occupations and workplaces for use with government officials, and creation of "rapid response centres", with government, trade union and NGO involvement, empowered to respond immediately to serious child labour violations.

365. IPEC works with the ILO Social Protection Sector in the field of occupational safety and health. A new edition of a manual on children and hazardous work has been published,[77] joint advice on labour inspection is provided and a network of national institutions to undertake research, training and advisory services concerning children in hazardous work is being jointly developed.

Demobilizing child soldiers

Clear role for ILO standards and technical cooperation

366. The Report of the expert of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ms. Graça Machel, submitted to the General Assembly, recommended that ILO standards, in areas such as vocational rehabilitation, the employment of disabled persons, special youth employment and training schemes and human resource development, should form the basis of innovative rehabilitation and social integration programmes for adolescents in post-conflict situations, especially for former child soldiers, children with disabilities and children who have missed educational opportunities.[78] Following the adoption of Convention No.182, the ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction strengthened its work on child soldiers. For example, in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** the ILO has been collaborating with UNICEF and the World Bank on the demobilization of child soldiers. The process starts with a rapid assessment and national workshops to develop a common policy framework. Reintegration of child soldiers requires at least three to five years of committed resources for family reunification, psychological support, education and income-generating opportunities. The ILO is now collaborating with other partners to test a number of new approaches; the first phase of a regional project in the Great Lakes area of Africa is already under way.

367. Children in the 14-18 age group are provided with vocational training, on-the-job training and enterprise development assistance. Former child soldiers are typically semi-literate, lack skills for the labour market or even for agricultural work and have few material assets or kinship links to give them access to these. Nevertheless, they may also have built up social and financial capital during the war, including looted property and personal contacts, which might help them set up enterprises in the informal economy. Improved socio-economic conditions encourage young soldiers to demobilize but they are likely to be more interested in work than in schooling.[79] They need education

---

[76] IPEC: *Good practices in action against child labour: A synthesis report of seven country studies*, op. cit.

[77] V. Forastieri: *Children at work: Health and safety risks*, 2nd ed. (Geneva, ILO, 2002).

[78] United Nations: *Promotion and protection of the rights of children*, op. cit., para. 301.

[79] Global Information Networks in Education (GINIE)/UNESCO/UNICEF: *Child and young adult soldiers: Recruitment prevention, demobilization and reintegration*, see www.ginie.org/ginie-crisis-links/childsoldiers/recruitment.html

opportunities with flexible hours and an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and life skills, such as nutrition, sexual health and managing finance. In post-conflict **El Salvador,** apprenticeships and micro-enterprise support "proved to be more effective than vocational training schemes in urban areas because they provided a more immediate way of acquiring skills and income. They also helped bring at least some economic activity to more rural and isolated locations".[80]

Legislation, enforcement and monitoring of child labour

Legal awareness and literacy

368.For legislation on children's rights in general, and child labour in particular, to have an effect, people in all walks of life must know about it, including children and their families, government officials, parliamentarians, employers and employers' organizations, human rights institutions, community organizations, the media, and others. Legal literacy and education must be adapted to the needs of the particular audience.

369. The ILO has supported a range of interventions with respect to improving legal and policy frameworks, awareness and law enforcement. These include law reform, translation of domestic laws into local dialects and languages and para-legal education for community groups and provision of legal services to child labour victims. Some "good practices" identified in country programmes include the passing of local ordinances and by-laws that make it possible to monitor child labour directly in communities, capitalizing on external events (for example, adoption of international instruments) to bring about domestic policy change, NGOs or trade unions contributing to the law-drafting process and keeping the child labour issue on the public agenda so as to increase the commitment of political leaders.

Multiple roles for labour inspectors

370. Considerable effort has gone into capacity building of labour inspectors (see box 4.11 on **Kenyan** and **Bulgarian** experiences). Practical training materials, focusing on the particular inspection issues relating to child labour, have been developed by the ILO for adaptation and use in many countries, including for a subregional programme in **Indonesia**, the **Philippines** and **Thailand**.

371. The role of labour inspectors goes well beyond that of law enforcer. Labour inspectors can spread awareness about the consequences of child labour, work with employers to improve the situation and work with trade unions or NGOs to ensure that children withdrawn from work receive appropriate support and rehabilitation. Other good practices include quality circles whereby labour ins pectors use non-confrontational methods to assist employers to carry out self-inspection, inspection groups affiliated with trade unions in workplaces with few employees, labour inspectors being involved in research to increase their understanding of child labour and labour inspectors being encouraged to use the information gained through their field studies to train their colleagues. Mobile inspection units can prove useful where child labour is found in remote and isolated regions of the country (see box 4.12).

Integrated solutions to child labour monitoring

372.The effectiveness of government labour inspection in detecting and combating child labour is often constrained by the resources available, which are not equal to the task, by perceptions of their role and by the hidden nature of much child labour, especially its worst forms, in informal and illegal activities. New approaches and partnerships are clearly needed for an integrated solution to child labour monitoring. Different models have already been developed and

---

[80] UNICEF: ***The demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers: Lessons learned from Angola and El Salvador***, Draft paper (New York, UNICEF, 2000), p. 21.

Box 4.11

Improving labour inspection services

The Kenyan Tripartite Labour Inspection Project concentrated on strengthening the organization and management of the Labour Inspectorate, upgrading its operations and raising the numbers and quality of inspections.

Inspection emphasized the importance of cooperating with worker representatives, of holistic monitoring which "mainstreamed" child labour issues in labour inspection reports and of determined follow-up. Meetings were held with employers to discuss infringements, prioritizing the most important ones. The numbers of inspection visits vastly increased during the project and have since been sustained, in spite of external funds no longer being available. The Kenya Labour Department is still undertaking some 20,000 inspections annually. Success factors included full publicity of activities and results within and outside the service, tripartite project management structures, participation and empowerment of all inspection staff, and extensive training programmes.

The Bulgaria Training for Integrated Labour Inspection project aims to reform the traditional, Soviet-style system of labour inspection in Bulgaria, by improving the efficiency of labour inspectors and establishing a training centre. The Government (Ministries of Labour and Health) and the social partners developed and implemented a National Policy for Integrated Labour Inspection, on the basis of "one enterprise – one inspector". A new concept for training and capacity building was developed. Training modules include social skills, occupational hygiene, technical safety, labour law and labour relations, preventive inspection methods, social dialogue and tripartite cooperation. The ILO plans to hold a regional meeting for managers of inspection systems from accession candidate countries and economies in transition, to present and draw lessons from the successful Bulgarian experience.

Source: W. von Richthofen: *Labour inspection as an actor in the global battle against child labour: Complexities and chances* (Geneva, ILO, 2002).

tested. In addition to the BGMEA model presented earlier (box 4.2), the Sialkot soccer-ball project in **Pakistan** is perhaps the other best-known example. It illustrates well the complexity of such integrated approaches to removing children from an entire sector in a poor area of Pakistan (see box 4.13). The overriding lesson is that monitoring and enforcement alone will not solve the problem; an integrated package of measures needs to be put in place.

373. Most recently, work supported by the ILO in the garment sector in **Cambodia,** has confirmed that neither child labour nor forced labour exists in the

Box 4.12

Brazil can point to successes in its fight against child labour

The Ministry of Labour coordinates a new special mobile child labour inspection unit that involves the Ministry of the Interior and the federal police. Results have been encouraging. For example, inspections carried out in the Amazon State of Parà, an agricultural region, indicate a decline in the incidence of child labour of 28 per cent in 2001.

The Ministry of Labour, the State Secretariat for Social Assistance and IPEC work together in a special programme to combat the worst forms of child labour throughout the country through improvement in families' livelihoods and children's education. Well over 800,000 children are expected to benefit from this programme by the end of 2002.

Box 4.13

Sialkot: Eliminating child labour in soccer-ball stitching

Until the 1970s, soccer-ball stitching in Sialkot, Pakistan, took place in city-based factories using regular employees. Then, owing to economic pressures, manufacturers began to decentralize into a home-based production system, and children became involved.

International pressure to stop the use of child labour in this industry mounted in the mid-1990s. The International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA) introduced a Code of Labour Practice banning the use of the official FIFA stamp on footballs made using child labour. In response, in 1997, the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a Partners' Agreement in Atlanta, Georgia, with the ILO and UNICEF for a joint project to stop children younger than 14 working in the industry. The "Atlanta Agreement" provided for:

— shifting production from homes to stitching centres that could be monitored;
— identification and withdrawal of child workers;
— an internal, industry-based monitoring system;
— an external verification system implemented by IPEC monitoring teams;
— a social protection and rehabilitation programme for children and their families;
— enrolment of children in primary schools.

Also working in this process are Save the Children (UK) and a local NGO, the Bunyad Literacy Community Council. The project provides health services, non-formal education, vocational training and micro-credit and savings schemes for the children and their families, and works with communities to facilitate changes in attitudes to child labour. By 2000, around 6,000 children were attending education centres and IPEC was monitoring production in 1,800 stitching centres.

Despite the successes of the programme, challenges still remain. Some children still work for manufacturers that do not participate in the programme. Subcontractors remain beyond the reach of the programme. Women who were not able to go to the new stitching centres have lost part of their income so additional steps are needed to maintain family incomes, and continued efforts are needed to promote other workers' rights in the industry.

factories investigated, although it did uncover some problems relating to other working conditions. The tripartite Project Advisory Committee welcomed the first report, and the contribution the project was making to improving overall respect for workers' rights in that country.[81]

What makes for effective assistance

374. One of the purposes of this Report is "to serve as a basis for assessing the effectiveness of the assistance provided by the Organization". What light does this review shed on the question of what constitutes "effective" assistance?

---

[81] The report, *First synthesis report on the working conditions situation in Cambodia's garment sector*, and the Project Advisory Committee's statement, can be accessed at www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/cambodia.htm

Elements of an effective assistance strategy against child labour

375. This review illustrates the tremendous variety of approaches that can be used, matching the diversity of situations in which child labourers toil. Some key themes that emerge are:

- Good programmes combine long- and short-term approaches. They respond to the immediate needs of child labourers but are firmly embedded in a long-term, poverty reduction and rights-based perspective.
- Good programmes are holistic (with multiple components), are adapted to local realities and are owned by local partners and participants.
- Good programmes use a range of tools and approaches in flexible and innovative ways.
- Good programmes put children first: they focus on children as well as on the work they perform.
- Good programmes take information gathering, analysis and use seriously throughout their life.

Part III. Towards an action plan for the effective abolition of child labour

1. Child labour and the Decent Work Agenda

ILO working with partners, including children

376. The scale and complexity of child labour dictate that neither IPEC, nor indeed the whole of the Organization, acting alone, can solve the problem. The ideas set out here naturally focus on what can be done by the Office working with the tripartite constituents and other partners and building on the work of IPEC. But real progress will result only from coherent, nationally owned and driven policies that focus on children and lead to positive change in the communities in which they live and work. The active involvement of employers, workers and their respective organizations, government and a wide range of policy-makers, non-governmental organizations and the media will continue to be crucial, and international organizations will need to strengthen their collaboration. Experience shows that children themselves must be more involved if action is to address fully their needs and rights. The powerlessness of children compared to adults is often at the root of their exploitation. All action to fight child labour must be firmly based on the notion of promoting the best interests of the child.

377. The goal of decent work for all women and men cannot be achieved unless child labour is abolished. Decent work brings together the ILO strategic objectives of fundamental principles and rights at work, employment and income opportunities, social protection and social dialogue and tripartism in a development-oriented and gender-equitable vision to guide economic and social policy choices.

The Decent Work Agenda and an integrated approach

378. As we have seen, child labour is a stubborn problem that manifests itself in different ways and to different extents in all countries, regardless of the level and type of economic and social development. It comes about and is perpetuated by interlinked immediate, underlying and structural or root causes. Only by tackling these causes together will the problem be eliminated. For example, poverty reduction and improved schooling are definitely necessary to abolish child labour, but they must be accompanied by innovative social protection systems to reduce the vulnerability of marginal groups, including children. Participation in an inclusive democracy, through social dialogue and other means, is essential if children are to be protected and allowed to develop their full potential. The Decent Work Agenda embodies just such an integrated approach to development. Respect for the four principles of the Declaration provides a cornerstone of this agenda.

2. Possible contours of an action plan

379. Over the past decade or so, consensus has grown at the international, national and local levels that the abolition of child labour represents both a desirable and a necessary goal for development. Advocacy and action to combat child labour have also intensified in this period, including that by IPEC and other parts of the ILO together with the tripartite constituents.

What next?

380. The question now is, "What next?" What more can ILO constituents, partners and the Office do to get children out of exploitative work and into schools and to prevent others from entering child labour? The Global Report under the follow-up to the Declaration offers a new vehicle for assessing, at four-year intervals, the effectiveness of assistance provided by the Organization in relation to the effective abolition of child labour. What can we do between now and 2006 to ensure that the next Global Report on this topic can proclaim the achievement of greater respect for the principle of the effective abolition of child labour?

An added sense of urgency

381. The deeper understanding we now have of child labour, its nature, causes and consequences, and how it is differentiated according to the sex and age of children, provides us with a stronger foundation on which to build strategies for abolition. The new ILO estimates on the extent of children's involvement in hazardous work and other worst forms of child labour give an added sense of urgency to the work at hand. But the review of action taken so far shows that there are no blueprints or ready-made, universal solutions. While we have a grasp of the basic architecture of effective policies and programmes for the abolition of child labour, their design at country level must remain flexible so that they can respond to different and constantly changing national circumstances.

382. Given this, an action plan for the ILO can perhaps most usefully focus on what could be done over the coming four-year period to strengthen the support the Organization gives to national stakeholders for their action to abolish child labour, particularly its worst forms. The four principles in the ILO Declaration and the strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda should play an integral part in the development of such an action plan.

Three pillars of an action plan

383. Such a plan would rest on three pillars:

- The first pillar is to reinforce the work of IPEC.
- The second pillar is to mainstream the abolition of child labour more actively across other ILO programmes and strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration and policy integration to this end.

- The third pillar is to forge closer partnerships with employers' and workers' organizations, as well as with other institutions and groups that share the goal of abolishing child labour.

Reinforcing the work of IPEC

384. IPEC continues to press for the progressive elimination of all child labour, with first priority being given to the urgent elimination of its worst forms. The gradual shift in its emphasis from being primarily a deliverer of operational programmes to a catalyst, facilitator and advocate for the child labour cause is expected to continue and intensify. The first pillar of an ILO action plan could reinforce IPEC's ongoing work in advocacy, policy development and research, and technical cooperation and advisory services in various ways, as outlined below.

Means of action converge at country level

385. At the national level such means of action converge in the country and time-bound programmes, which combine advocacy, awareness raising, ratification and legislative action, direct assistance to children, families and communities, capacity-strengthening of different actors and policy support. Such convergence is mirrored at headquarters by ensuring that the different facets of IPEC's work are closely integrated, for example through the use of systematic feedback from "hands-on" programme delivery to provide information for child labour policy development and advocacy.

Enhancing Office systems and procedures

386. A further dimension to enhance IPEC's work could address the management and administrative environment in which the programme operates. Acting on the recommendations of the IPEC International Steering Committee, reporting to the ILO Governing Body could be streamlined. Ways could be found to attract and accept voluntary funding from non-traditional sources. More generally, this would involve accelerating the Office-wide reforms now under way to enhance support for programme delivery (for example, financial procedures, human resources development and harmonization of programme databases).

387. The major steps that could be taken specifically to reinforce IPEC's work can be grouped under advocacy, research and policy, and technical cooperation.

Advocacy

- To maintain awareness worldwide of the urgency of the task of the abolition of child labour, particularly its worst forms, and to mobilize constituents, communities and children around this cause.
- To reinforce the ILO's "clearing-house" function to collect, document and widely publicize good practice examples for a wide range of audiences.
- To keep up the momentum of the campaigns for universal ratification of Convention No. 182, for broader ratification of Convention No. 138, and for full implementation of all child labour instruments, in collaboration with other relevant ILO units.
- To advocate the abolition of child labour in the context of respect for all four fundamental principles and rights at work under the framework of the ILO Declaration.
- To consider organizing a "Convention No. 182 plus five" event in 2005 (five years after the Convention entered into force) as a prelude to the next Global Report on the effective abolition of child labour in 2006.
- To highlight regularly ILO success stories in the fight against child labour through the media and using other communications technologies.

Research and policy

- To continue to strengthen national capacity to undertake research on child labour, using a variety of techniques that allow analysis and understanding of both qualitative and quantitative dimensions.
- To develop and apply new gender-sensitive research tools, and participatory ways of using them, especially for hidden groups of children working in the worst forms of child labour, including in illicit activities.
- To undertake analysis and share findings on hazardous work and its effects on children of different ages, sex, socio-economic and health status.
- To reinforce policy research and development in emerging areas of concern, particularly those relating to the impact of HIV/AIDS and of other development shocks on child labour.
- To strengthen "how to" knowledge in the monitoring of former, current and potential child labourers in workplaces and communities, including new multi-stakeholder approaches to monitoring in the informal economy and of the worst forms of child labour.

Technical cooperation

- To step up support to integrated, time-bound programmes for the abolition of the worst forms of child labour in countries where governments demonstrate real commitment through cooperation involving allocation of their own resources.
- To continue support to programmes targeting the creation of child-labour-free sectors and geographical areas.
- To select from among existing country programmes those ready for evolution to comprehensive time-bound programmes (as resources permit), and to develop approaches to allow for a smooth transition.
- To foster sustainability by continuing to strengthen the capacity of governments, the social partners and other civil society partners, expanding the IPEC networking initiative and encouraging better in-country coordination of information about children and child labour.
- To build local ownership of interventions by ensuring broad-based and meaningful participation of different groups of stakeholders, including communities and children.
- To continue to document the positive and negative lessons learned through technical cooperation, and to disseminate these widely to provide information for future policy and programme design within the ILO and by interested regional, national and international actors.
- To promote the mainstreaming of the abolition of child labour in national development policies and programmes and in international efforts to eliminate poverty.
- To encourage countries to enter into bilateral and/or multilateral agreements to tackle cross-border issues, such as migration, trafficking of children and pornography on the Internet.

Mainstreaming the effective abolition of child labour in the Decent Work Agenda

More programmes to address the abolition of child labour

388. The second pillar of an ILO action plan could consist of efforts to ensure that the abolition of child labour is taken up actively and consistently as a goal across the Organization, in the context of the Decent Work Agenda. This would imply:

— more joint activities between IPEC and other ILO units and programmes in the field and at headquarters, building on the significant number existing already;

— more initiatives that address the abolition of child labour as a specific objective by other units and programmes with relevant expertise.

Integrated frameworks at country level

389. A further dimension would intensify the technical and administrative integration of IPEC at country and subregional levels into overall ILO country and regional programmes. Integrated frameworks for promoting decent work, developed at national level, will provide the opportunity to ensure that the effective abolition of child labour features as a key component in a coherent ILO country-based approach to decent work.

Practical suggestions

390. Some practical suggestions for consideration under this second pillar of a possible action plan are:

- To strengthen existing and to initiate new cross-sectoral collaboration in child labour programmes, for example, in innovative approaches to social protection in the informal economy, and the use of microfinance and micro-enterprise development for family income replacement following withdrawal of child labourers.
- To accumulate and disseminate knowledge of how respect for the other three categories of fundamental principles and rights at work contributes to the effective abolition of child labour, how reduction of child labour is linked to the achievement of other decent work goals in labour standards, employment, social protection and social dialogue, and how any tensions or trade-offs in the long or short term can most effectively be resolved.
- To inaugurate an online yearbook of child labour statistics and to consider the development of a "child labour risk index" as an early warning and monitoring tool for child labour.
- To construct tools to enable governments to measure the extent to which expenditure under national budgets supports the goal of the abolition of child labour.
- To encourage all programmes to consider explicitly, when planning activities, their potential impact on children and child labour; to introduce systematic monitoring and reporting by all operational programmes on the child labour aspects and implications of their work.
- To integrate child labour issues into ILO-sponsored meetings and activities on related topics, to highlight linkages to the other fundamental principles and rights at work, and to promote media coverage of these issues.

Forging closer partnerships

Reinforced and extended partnerships for action

391. Thus far, our focus has been on what the ILO can do to reinforce its fight against child labour. This is a problem, however, that cannot be effectively tackled by the ILO alone; hence the imperative of reinforcing and extending partnerships. This third pillar of an action plan for the effective abolition of child labour could include action:

- To reinforce global alliances for the abolition of child labour as a fundamental human rights issue at the core of social and economic development.
- To fortify broad-based, "tripartite-plus" networks for advocacy and action against child labour, in ways that draw upon the strengths of employers' and workers' organizations.
- To promote new ways to ensure that the voices and perspectives of children, their parents and the communities in which they live and work are heard and taken into account when action to combat child labour is discussed, planned and implemented at all levels, from local to international.
- To apply the ILO perspective and experience in the field of child labour to planning and implementation for the broad goals of the international community in poverty reduction, education for all, gender equality, health and other relevant areas.
- To encourage all partners to take into account the recommendations of major international meetings, especially those of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children (May 2002), as they relate to child labour and the work of the ILO.
- To urge international players to integrate the effective abolition of child labour as an explicit objective into all relevant macroeconomic and social policy frameworks (for example, in the lending strategies, procurement guidelines and country assistance strategies of the international financial institutions, the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, bilateral donors' aid frameworks, etc.).
- To advocate for inclusion of the incidence of child labour as a key indicator in national poverty reduction and development policy frameworks, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.
- To engage in mutually reinforcing partnerships with other organizations in initiatives to combat child labour in ways that exploit the special strengths of the ILO to a maximum, and to draw on the complementary strengths of partners (for example, the International Organization for Migration on trafficking, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on child soldiers, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria on the impacts of disease on child labour).
- To expand or reinforce partnerships with professional organizations in areas such as occupational health, vocational training and other topics of relevance to child labour, and with academic institutions for action-oriented research.
- To forge multi-partner alliances in economic sectors where children are at particular risk of child labour, building on experiences such as those in the tobacco and cocoa industries.
- To mobilize resources from multiple partners so as to enhance financial and technical support for integrated, time-bound programmes in member States that bring significant political commitment and their own resources to bear on the problem.

The three ILO means of action

392. The three-pillar approach outlined above would also lend itself to an assessment, four years from now, of the effectiveness of the assistance provided by the Organization to its member States in their efforts to abolish child labour. It would involve the ILO's three main means of action – normative and promotional work, advocacy backed up by research, and operational technical cooperation programmes – all undertaken through close cooperation between the ILO constituents and other partners at local, national and international levels.

Suggested points for discussion

1. What are the best ways to ensure that the abolition of child labour is integrated into broader national policy agendas?

2. What is the best division of respective roles and responsibilities between national partners and the ILO in the context of implementation of time-bound programmes for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour?

3. In the light of their experience so far, how can employers, workers and their representative organizations most effectively participate in action against child labour?

4. The recent figures released by the ILO show that children in the worst forms of child labour represent a high proportion of the total number of child labourers. What conclusions should policy-makers, employers' and workers' organizations and the ILO draw from this for national action and for the future orientation of technical cooperation programmes?

Annexes

Annex 1

ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up

Whereas the ILO was founded in the conviction that social justice is essential to universal and lasting peace;

Whereas economic growth is essential but not sufficient to ensure equity, social progress and the eradication of poverty, confirming the need for the ILO to promote strong social policies, justice and democratic institutions;

Whereas the ILO should, now more than ever, draw upon all its standard-setting, technical cooperation and research resources in all its areas of competence, in particular employment, vocational training and working conditions, to ensure that, in the context of a global strategy for economic and social development, economic and social policies are mutually reinforcing components in order to create broad-based sustainable development;

Whereas the ILO should give special attention to the problems of persons with special social needs, particularly the unemployed and migrant workers, and mobilize and encourage international, regional and national efforts aimed at resolving their problems, and promote effective policies aimed at job creation;

Whereas, in seeking to maintain the link between social progress and economic growth, the guarantee of fundamental principles and rights at work is of particular significance in that it enables the persons concerned to claim freely and on the basis of equality of opportunity their fair share of the wealth which they have helped to generate, and to achieve fully their human potential;

Whereas the ILO is the constitutionally mandated international organization and the competent body to set and deal with international labour standards, and enjoys universal support and acknowledgement in promoting fundamental rights at work as the expression of its constitutional principles;

Whereas it is urgent, in a situation of growing economic interdependence, to reaffirm the immutable nature of the fundamental principles and rights embodied in the Constitution of the Organization and to promote their universal application;

The International Labour Conference,

1. Recalls:
   (a) that in freely joining the ILO, all Members have endorsed the principles and rights set out in its Constitution and in the Declaration of Philadelphia, and have undertaken to work towards attaining the overall objectives of the Organization to the best of their resources and fully in line with their specific circumstances;
   (b) that these principles and rights have been expressed and developed in the form of specific rights and obligations in Conventions recognized as fundamental both inside and outside the Organization.
2. Declares that all Members, even if they have not ratified the Conventions in question, have an obligation arising from the very fact of membership in the Organization, to respect, to promote and to realize, in good faith and in accordance with the Constitution, the principles concerning the fundamental rights which are the subject of those Conventions, namely:
   (a) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
   (b) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;
   (c) the effective abolition of child labour; and
   (d) the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
3. Recognizes the obligation on the Organization to assist its Members, in response to their established and expressed needs, in order to attain these objectives by making full use of its constitutional, operational and budgetary resources, including by the mobilization of external resources and support, as well as by encouraging other international organizations with which the ILO has established relations, pursuant to article 12 of its Constitution, to support these efforts:
   (a) by offering technical cooperation and advisory services to promote the ratification and implementation of the fundamental Conventions;
   (b) by assisting those Members not yet in a position to ratify some or all of these Conventions in their efforts to respect, to promote and to realize the principles concerning fundamental rights which are the subject of those Conventions; and
   (c) by helping the Members in their efforts to create a climate for economic and social development.
4. Decides that, to give full effect to this Declaration, a promotional follow-up, which is meaningful and effective, shall be implemented in accordance with the measures specified in the annex hereto, which shall be considered as an integral part of this Declaration.
5. Stresses that labour standards should not be used for protectionist trade purposes, and that nothing in this Declaration and its follow-up shall be invoked or otherwise used for such purposes; in addition, the comparative advantage of any country should in no way be called into question by this Declaration and its follow-up.

Annex

Follow-up to the Declaration

I. Overall purpose

1. The aim of the follow-up described below is to encourage the efforts made by the Members of the Organization to promote the fundamental principles and rights enshrined in the Constitution of the ILO and the Declaration of Philadelphia and reaffirmed in this Declaration.

2. In line with this objective, which is of a strictly promotional nature, this follow-up will allow the identification of areas in which the assistance of the Organization through its technical cooperation activities may prove useful to its Members to help them implement these fundamental principles and rights. It is not a substitute for the established supervisory mechanisms, nor shall it impede their functioning; consequently, specific situations within the purview of those mechanisms shall not be examined or re-examined within the framework of this follow-up.

3. The two aspects of this follow-up, described below, are based on existing procedures: the annual follow-up concerning non-ratified fundamental Conventions will entail merely some adaptation of the present modalities of application of article 19, paragraph 5(e) of the Constitution; and the global report will serve to obtain the best results from the procedures carried out pursuant to the Constitution.

II. Annual follow-up concerning non-ratified fundamental Conventions

A. Purpose and scope

1. The purpose is to provide an opportunity to review each year, by means of simplified procedures to replace the four-year review introduced by the Governing Body in 1995, the efforts made in accordance with the Declaration by Members which have not yet ratified all the fundamental Conventions.

2. The follow-up will cover each year the four areas of fundamental principles and rights specified in the Declaration.

B. Modalities

1. The follow-up will be based on reports requested from Members under article 19, paragraph 5(e) of the Constitution. The report forms will be drawn up so as to obtain information from governments which have not ratified one or more of the fundamental Conventions, on any changes which may have taken place in their law and practice, taking due account of article 23 of the Constitution and established practice.

2. These reports, as compiled by the Office, will be reviewed by the Governing Body.

3. With a view to presenting an introduction to the reports thus compiled, drawing attention to any aspects which might call for a more in-depth discussion, the Office may call upon a group of experts appointed for this purpose by the Governing Body.

4. Adjustments to the Governing Body's existing procedures should be examined to allow Members which are not represented on the Governing Body to provide, in the most appropriate way, clarifications which might prove necessary or useful during Governing Body discussions to supplement the information contained in their reports.

III. Global report

A. Purpose and scope

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a dynamic global picture relating to each category of fundamental principles and rights noted during the preceding four-year period, and to serve as a basis for assessing the effectiveness of the assistance provided by the Organization, and for determining priorities for the following period, in the form of action plans for technical cooperation designed in particular to mobilize the internal and external resources necessary to carry them out.
2. The report will cover, each year, one of the four categories of fundamental principles and rights in turn.

B. Modalities

1. The report will be drawn up under the responsibility of the Director-General on the basis of official information, or information gathered and assessed in accordance with established procedures. In the case of States which have not ratified the fundamental Conventions, it will be based in particular on the findings of the aforementioned annual follow-up. In the case of Members which have ratified the Conventions concerned, the report will be based in particular on reports as dealt with pursuant to article 22 of the Constitution.
2. This report will be submitted to the Conference for tripartite discussion as a report of the Director-General. The Conference may deal with this report separately from reports under article 12 of its Standing Orders, and may discuss it during a sitting devoted entirely to this report, or in any other appropriate way. It will then be for the Governing Body, at an early session, to draw conclusions from this discussion concerning the priorities and plans of action for technical cooperation to be implemented for the following four-year period.

IV. It is understood that:

1. Proposals shall be made for amendments to the Standing Orders of the Governing Body and the Conference which are required to implement the preceding provisions.
2. The Conference shall, in due course, review the operation of this follow-up in the light of the experience acquired to assess whether it has adequately fulfilled the overall purpose articulated in Part I.

The foregoing is the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up duly adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organization during its Eighty-sixth Session which was held at Geneva and declared closed the 18 June 1998.

IN FAITH WHEREOF we have appended our signatures this nineteenth day of June 1998.

The President of the Conference,

JEAN-JACQUES OECHSLIN.

The Director-General of the International Labour Office,

MICHEL HANSENNE.

Annex 2

Table of ratifications of ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 and annual reports submitted under the Declaration follow-up in relation to the effective abolition of child labour

No. 138 – Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (116 ratifications by 1 February 2002)

No. 182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (115 ratifications by 1 February 2002)

Explanation of symbols in the table

R	Convention ratified by 1 February 2002
I	Intention to ratify expressed by 1 February 2002
–	Convention not ratified by 1 February 2002
Yes	Annual report received
No	Annual report not received
n/a	Not applicable as both Convention No. 138 and Convention No. 182 ratified by 1 February 2002

Member States	Ratifications		Annual report submitted under the Declaration follow-up, 2002
	C.138	C.182	
Afghanistan	–	–	No
Albania	R	R	n/a
Algeria	R	R	n/a
Angola	R	R	n/a
Antigua and Barbuda	R	I	No
Argentina	R	R	n/a
Armenia	I	I	Yes
Australia	–	I	Yes
Austria	R	R	n/a

Member States	Ratifications		Annual report submitted under the Declaration follow-up, 2002
	C.138	C.182	
Azerbaijan	R	I	Yes
Bahamas	R	R	n/a
Bahrain	I	R	Yes
Bangladesh	–	R	No
Barbados	R	R	n/a
Belarus	R	R	n/a
Belgium	R	I	Yes
Belize	R	R	n/a
Benin	R	R	n/a
Bolivia	R	I	No
Botswana	R	R	n/a
Brazil	R	R	n/a
Bulgaria	R	R	n/a
Burkina Faso	R	R	n/a
Burundi	R	–	No
Cambodia	R	–	Yes
Cameroon	R	I	No
Canada	I	R	Yes
Cape Verde	I	R	No
Central African Republic	R	R	n/a
Chad	I	R	No
Chile	R	R	n/a
China	R	I	Yes
Colombia	R	–	No
Comoros	I	I	Yes
Congo	R	–	No
Democratic Republic of the Congo	R	R	n/a
Costa Rica	R	R	n/a
Côte d'Ivoire	I	I	No
Croatia	R	R	n/a
Cuba	R	–	Yes
Cyprus	R	R	n/a
Czech Republic	I	R	Yes
Denmark	R	R	n/a
Djibouti	I	I	No
Dominica	R	R	n/a
Dominican Republic	R	R	n/a
Ecuador	R	R	n/a
Egypt	R	I	Yes

Member States	Ratifications		Annual report submitted under the Declaration follow-up, 2002
	C.138	C.182	
El Salvador	R	R	n/a
Equatorial Guinea	R	R	n/a
Eritrea	R	I	No
Estonia	I	R	Yes
Ethiopia	R	I	Yes
Fiji	I	I	No
Finland	R	R	n/a
France	R	R	n/a
Gabon	I	R	Yes
Gambia	R	R	n/a
Georgia	R	I	Yes
Germany	R	I	Yes
Ghana	I	R	Yes
Greece	R	R	n/a
Grenada	I	–	No
Guatemala	R	R	n/a
Guinea	–	–	No
Guinea-Bissau	–	–	No
Guyana	R	R	n/a
Haiti	I	I	No
Honduras	R	R	n/a
Hungary	R	R	n/a
Iceland	R	R	n/a
India	I	I	Yes
Indonesia	R	R	n/a
Iran, Islamic Republic of	I	I	Yes
Iraq	R	R	n/a
Ireland	R	R	n/a
Israel	R	I	No
Italy	R	R	n/a
Jamaica	I	I	No
Japan	R	R	n/a
Jordan	R	R	n/a
Kazakhstan	R	I	Yes
Kenya	R	R	n/a
Kiribati	I	I	Yes
Republic of Korea	R	R	n/a
Kuwait	R	R	n/a
Kyrgyzstan	R	–	No

Member States	Ratifications		Annual report submitted under the Declaration follow-up, 2002
	C.138	C.182	
Lao People's Democratic Republic	I	–	No
Latvia	I	I	Yes
Lebanon	I	R	Yes
Lesotho	R	R	n/a
Liberia	–	–	No
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	R	R	n/a
Lithuania	R	I	Yes
Luxembourg	R	R	n/a
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	R	–	No
Madagascar	R	R	n/a
Malawi	R	R	n/a
Malaysia	R	R	n/a
Mali	I	R	Yes
Malta	R	R	n/a
Mauritania	R	R	n/a
Mauritius	R	R	n/a
Mexico	I	R	Yes
Republic of Moldova	R	I	Yes
Mongolia	I	R	No
Morocco	R	R	n/a
Mozambique	I	I	Yes
Myanmar	I	I	Yes
Namibia	R	R	n/a
Nepal	R	R	n/a
Netherlands	R	I	Yes
New Zealand	–	R	Yes
Nicaragua	R	R	n/a
Niger	R	R	n/a
Nigeria	I	I	No
Norway	R	R	n/a
Oman	I	R	Yes
Pakistan	–	R	Yes
Panama	R	R	n/a
Papua New Guinea	R	R	n/a
Paraguay	I	R	No
Peru	I	R	Yes
Philippines	R	R	n/a
Poland	R	I	Yes

Member States	Ratifications		Annual report submitted under the Declaration follow-up, 2002
	C.138	C.182	
Portugal	R	R	n/a
Qatar	I	R	Yes
Romania	R	R	n/a
Russian Federation	R	I	Yes
Rwanda	R	R	n/a
Saint Kitts and Nevis	I	R	No
Saint Lucia	I	R	Yes
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	I	R	Yes
San Marino	R	R	n/a
Sao Tome and Principe	I	–	No
Saudi Arabia	I	R	Yes
Senegal	R	R	n/a
Seychelles	R	R	n/a
Sierra Leone	–	–	No
Singapore	–	R	Yes
Slovakia	R	R	n/a
Slovenia	R	R	n/a
Solomon Islands	–	–	No
Somalia	–	–	No
South Africa	R	R	n/a
Spain	R	R	n/a
Sri Lanka	R	R	n/a
Sudan	I	I	Yes
Suriname	I	I	Yes
Swaziland	–	–	No
Sweden	R	R	n/a
Switzerland	R	R	n/a
Syrian Arab Republic	R	I	Yes
Tajikistan	R	I	No
Tanzania, United Republic of	R	R	n/a
Thailand	I	R	Yes
Togo	R	R	n/a
Trinidad and Tobago	I	I	No
Tunisia	R	R	n/a
Turkey	R	R	n/a
Turkmenistan	–	–	No
Uganda	I	R	No
Ukraine	R	R	n/a
United Arab Emirates	R	R	n/a

Member States	Ratifications		Annual report submitted under the Declaration follow-up, 2002
	C.138	C.182	
United Kingdom	R	R	n/a
United States	I	R	Yes
Uruguay	R	R	n/a
Uzbekistan	I	I	No
Venezuela	R	I	No
Viet Nam	–	R	Yes
Yemen	R	R	n/a
Yugoslavia	R	–	No
Zambia	R	R	n/a
Zimbabwe	R	R	n/a

Annex 3

List of countries involved in the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)

The 75 IPEC participating countries

	Countries that have signed an MOU[1]	Countries and territories associated with IPEC
Africa	Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia	Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe
Arab States	Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen	Syrian Arab Republic, West Bank and Gaza Strip
Asia	Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand	China, Viet Nam
Europe	Albania, Romania, Turkey	Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Ukraine
Latin America and the Caribbean	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela	Belize, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay

[1] MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

IPEC donor governments and organizations (1992–2001)

	Biennium				
	1992-93	1994-95	1996-97	1998-99	2000-01
Australia		x		x	
Austria				x	
Belgium	x	x	x	x	x
Canada			x	x	x
Denmark			x	x	x
Finland				x	x
France		x	x	x	x
Germany	x	x	x	x	x
Hungary					x
Italy			x	x	x
Japan				x	x
Luxembourg			x		
Netherlands				x	x
New Zealand					x
Norway		x	x	x	x
Poland				x	x
Spain		x	x	x	x
Sweden				x	x
Switzerland				x	
United Kingdom		x	x	x	x
United States		x	x	x	x
Ayuntamiento de Alcalá de Henares					x
Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid				x	x
European Commission				x	
Italian Social Partners' Initiative		x	x	x	
Japanese Trade Union Confederation (RENGO)				x	x